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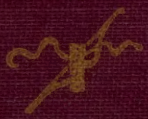
MOULDING A MAIDEN



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MOULDING A MAIDEN.

By Albert Ross,

AUTHOR OF

"Her Husband's Friend," "In Stella's Shadow,"
"Speaking of Ellen," "Thou Shalt Not,"
"His Private Character," Etc.

"It will avail nothing to a girl that she has health, beauty and intelligence, if her **character** *is not moulded rightly. And no* **man,** *though he were a saint, can properly mould it."—Page* 185.

NEW YORK:

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TO MY READERS.

In introducing the sixth of the "Albatross Novels" to the reader, I shall attempt neither apology nor explanation, though I think no other novelist of the present age has aroused so much unwarranted criticism. I have been accused of almost every fault. Not only are my stories very "wicked," but they are wholly uninteresting, if we are to believe the reviewers of some of the periodicals. There is only one point which no one has cared to dispute—more of my books have been sold in the last thirty months than of those written by any of my very excellent and much lauded contemporaries.

But I must be careful. A critic whose article has just fallen under my observation accuses me of boastfulness, because I once before alluded to the success of my ventures in the literary field. Let me assure him that I did it rather in a spirit of gratitude and appreciation than of undue pride. I have not yet ceased to wonder that the American public has chosen to purchase, in so short a time, nearly half a million copies of my works. I am continually surprised at the figures which my publisher gives me, and at the statements of traveling friends that hardly a book-stand from Bangor to the Pacific is without these volumes.

Why this immense circulation? "Because you have dealt in forbidden subjects," says the chorus. Is that really the reason? Then why has "Her

Husband's Friend," which is admitted to be within the strictest bounds, surpassed in its sales, during its first four months, even the figures of "Thou Shalt Not," counting the same length of time? Why have the orders for the present book been larger than any of those received before, in advance of its publication? Perhaps you have made a mistake, Mr. Critic. In spite of your opinion, there may be something worth reading in these novels.

In an article which appeared in the *Arena* for March, 1891, I fully explained my theory of what is permissible in fiction. If I have done anything reprehensible it is in not living closer to that theory. One hates to walk the public streets with a legion of curs barking at his heels, be his conscience ever so clear. If enough mud be thrown with diligence at a given object, says the proverb, some of it will stick. I find myself affected by the hue and cry, senseless as I know it to be. And I can the less excuse myself when I find the number of my followers increasing instead of falling away.

You, my dear patrons, are, after all, the only judges for whose opinion I ought to care. Write and tell me, as you have done before, what you think of my work. What have you to say of Janet Steiner? Have I made Rosalie what she should be? Is Stanley Melrose impossibly precocious or Lysle too virtuous for a student of the Latin Quarter? Tell me all about it, and though I may not answer you, I shall treasure every word as though it came from one whose voice and face I knew intimately.

ALBERT ROSS.

ADDRESS:
No. 33 West 23d Street,
New York City.

MOULDING A MAIDEN.

CHAPTER I.

MAX VANDENHOFF'S WILL.

"Well, I'll be hanged!"

"No doubt about that, I guess."

"What an unnecessary statement!"

"Come, Lysle, tell as something we don't know."

Four of the students of Brooks Academy were gathered in the room of one of their number, during the part of the day devoted to recreation. The first sentence above quoted was uttered, in a tone of the greatest surprise, by the youngest of the party, and the succeeding ones were merely the attempts of his companions to show their wit.

Carlysle Melrose, or "Lysle," as everybody called him, had just received a letter, and it was evidently its contents that had drawn from him the exclamation referred to.

"The oddest thing has happened that you ever heard of!" he said, looking up. "A relation of mine has died in Europe—'

"And left you a fortune of a million pounds!" cried Arthur Peck. "My best wish is that you may be unable to eat or sleep till you've given us half.

A million pounds! What the dickens can you do with all that money? It is altogether too much for you!"

Lysle was still too deeply absorbed in the letter he had received to do more than stare at the rest of the boys, without comprehending in the least what they were saying.

"What are you going to do about that fortune?" continued Peck, with an air of mock insistance. "Come, we are entitled to know."

"My relation has not left me any large sum," said Lysle, "but he has—"

"You dog!" exclaimed Luke Woodstock, another of the party, taking up the joke begun by Arthur Peck. "Do you intend to swindle us out of our share of the estate? By the vane on yonder Academy, I swear—."

"Oh, let him tell his story," interposed Dudley Morgan.

Silence being restored, Lysle proceeded to reveal the news that had caused him so much astonishment.

"It is the strangest thing in the world. I had a cousin named Vandenhoff, whom I have never seen to remember, as he has spent most of his later years in Germany and France. He has recently died, leaving an infant daughter, who is to inherit his fortune when she comes of age. His wife is also dead, it appears, and in his will he has named three guardians for the little girl—a cousin of his wife's, named Janet Steiner, a maiden lady of twenty-five years or so, Stanley Melrose and myself."

At the last word, all of Lysle's companions burst into uncontrollable laughter.

"You!" cried the party in chorus. "You'd make

a nice guardian for a young lady! What was the matter with the old gent—crazy?"

"I should think so," was the sober reply. "And yet he has always been supposed to be sane enough. He was not an 'old gent,' either. Not more than thirty at the most. I'm very sorry to hear he's dead, upon my word!"

The boys seemed to realize, all at once, that there was something besides fun in the affair, and they looked at Lysle with a new interest.

"Here is the whole story," he said. "Max Vandenhoff inherited his money from his father, and has spent most of his time since then abroad. He must have married within a comparatively short time, as I had never heard of him except as a bachelor. His wife's cousin, Miss Steiner, who writes me this letter, says she had been acting for some time as a companion to Mrs. Vandenhoff, who died shortly after the birth of this child. The father's death occurred very unexpectedly, and he has left the little girl to our care, because we are, as she says, her sole relations."

Luke Woodstock said he wondered what the law was in a case like this.

"Can you exercise such authority as is contemplated in that will," he asked, "while you are yourself a minor? I should think you would have to wait till you could control your own property before you could handle that of other people."

Woodstock was a little older than the others, and as he intended to be a lawyer, this hazard of an opinion was received with due consideration.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Lysle, in reply. "If your conjecture should prove correct it will leave Miss Steiner in charge of her for a good while, as

Stanley is only two years older than I am. But there can't be much that we can do, any way, while the child is such an infant. I imagine that all Vandenhoff intended was to provide for emergencies. Stanley and I were merely put in, I suppose, to act as alternates in the event of her death."

Luke then asked, with an eye to the main thing of importance, what provision there was for recompense to the guardians.

"We all get something," replied Lysle, referring again to the letter which he held in his hand. "Miss Steiner gets twenty-five thousand dollars, Stanley fifteen thousand dollars, and I five thousand dollars."

"What's the reason for the sliding scale?" queried young Peck.

"I'm sure I don't know. Perhaps Miss Steiner has no other expectations."

But Luke took up the cudgel in great indignation.

"Stanley has at least as much coming to him from his father's estate as you have from yours, and yet he is to get three times what you do, by this will. Now, that is what I call downright meanness!"

Lysle Melrose surveyed the speaker with his calm, wondering eyes.

"I am sure it was Mr. Vandenhoff's money to do as he pleased with," said he. "There was no obligation for him to leave me a cent, unless he wished. It was very kind of him to remember me at all. It would be unhandsome to find fault merely because some one else gets more."

Upon this, Dudley Morgan, who had been pacing up and down the room in silence, paused to interject a remark.

"It isn't because he has left you such a little sum

that I care, Lysle, but because he has left Stanley so much. He will never spend a cent of that fifteen thousand dollars on anybody but himself. He is the meanest, stingiest—"

Lysle rose quickly, and caught hold of his companion's arm.

"Stop, Dud, unless you wish to offend me," he said. "I cannot hear such remarks about my cousin."

"It is true, though," put in Luke Woodstock, impetuously, "and every boy at this academy will say the same."

"They won't say it to me, for I'll not listen," replied Lysle, firmly, taking up his hat. He was not in temper, but he had a grieved look that told its own story. "When you fellows are ready to talk about something that interests me, I shall be glad to return," he added, taking a step toward the door, as if to quit the room.

But Dudley had him by the sleeve, and on behalf of the entire group of offenders promised to drop the unpleasant discussion about Stanley if he would remain. Lysle was a great favorite at Brooks, and none of its inmates were more attached to him than was Morgan.

"I've been studying it all out," remarked Woodstock, when the party were seated once more. "Your relation was a man of discretion, after all. He has appointed Miss Steiner to this trust because he wanted some one to look after the moral and religious welfare of his child. He has named Stanley on account of his financial tastes, to see that her fortune is well invested, and made to earn a large dividend. And he has added you, in the hope that, when she grows older you will develop her artistic nature.

With three such guardians, the young lady ought to become a perfect paragon. If you take as good care of her as you should, Lysle," he added, gayly, "I think I shall postpone all thoughts of marriage till she becomes of sufficient age, and then put in an application for her hand."

This was considered amusing enough to draw laugh from everybody in the room, and put all in the best of feeling.

"How old do you say she is now?" inquired Morgan.

"Nearly a year."

"And her fortune, how big is that?"

"Nearly two hundred thousand."

"It will be two millions by the time she is twenty-one," said Morgan, "with Stanley to manipulate it. Luke, accept my congratulations."

There was an implied reflection against Stanley in this statement, but it was veiled with a compliment, and Lysle could not very well object.

"Confound all your avaricious speculations!" burst fort Arthur Peck. "What color are her eyes? That's the question. Will she be tall, short or medium? Will she weigh just a hundred and fifteen—the charming weight for a woman—or will she tip the scales at one hundred and eighty? Will she be sweet and tender and clinging, or cold, formal and dignified? What size shoes will she wear on her feet? What will be the number of her gloves? Will her upper lip have a delicious shortness, causing the pearls beneath to drive men to distraction? Will her shoulders be shapely, but not too full, her arms slender, but beautifully moulded, her slight bust the promise of a not too grand fulfilment? Will her—"

But at this juncture, young Melrose uttered an

exclamation that stopped his companion short in the midst of his rhapsody.

"What's the matter, Lysle?" inquired the speaker.

"You've no business to talk in that style, Arthur," was the reply, "and you know it."

"Not of a baby a year old?" laughed Peck.

"No, not when she is to be my ward. Beside, you were not speaking of the baby that is, but of the woman that is to be."

Arthur seemed determined, however, to consider it nothing more than a joke.

"Serious as ever!" he exclaimed, still laughing. "I was only drawing an artistic picture for the eye of an artist. You are going to be a great painter, you must remember. These fellows"—pointing to Morgan and Woodstock—"whose mission in life will be the weaving of cloth and the drawing of deeds, might misunderstand me, but you should not. You are an artist, and you ought to look at things from an artistic standpoint."

Still Lysle declined to be convinced, and it was evident that the remarks he had heard had nettled him more than he wished to show.

"Say what you may," he answered, "I think no one would care to hear the physical qualities of his female relations debated with your remarkable freedom. You may mean all right, but your language is very distasteful to me."

Peck grew angry at that.

"Oh, if you don't like it"—he drawled, in that exasperatingly slow tone which is often more insulting than a direct rebuff.

"I don't!" replied Lysle, sharply. "And what's more, I won't have it!"

"*Won't I*" echoed Peck, in a rage. "If I chose to go on, what would you do about it, I'd like to know?"

It takes very little to precipitate a quarrel between schoolmates. Blows would have followed in another moment, had not Luke Woodstock, the coolest head in the party, interposed, and told them both that the one who struck first would have to fight him, too.

"That isn't the question," said Peck, still smarting under his fancied injuries. "Who was wrong, that's the point?"

"No matter about that," said Luke. "You fellows think the world of each other, and in a minute more you'd have been pounding faces like two ragamuffins of the street. Drop it, now, and never even think of it again."

"But who was right?" reiterated Peck. "If I was wrong, I will apologize. If he was, let him do the same."

Luke looked at both the boys.

"Do you want me to decide it?" he asked Melrose.

"Yes," said Lysle.

"Well, Arthur was wrong in the first place," he said, "and you were wrong in the second. Besides that, Dudley and I were wrong to listen without protest when we could see so plainly that you were being annoyed."

"Shall I apologize?" demanded Arthur.

"No."

"Shall I?" asked Lysle, with an effort.

"No, but I want you to shake hands."

This was done with a fairly good grace on the part of both.

"Now, is there anything else you wish to tell

us about your new ward?" asked Woodstock, with an idea that this would be a good way to get the conversation back again into agreeable channels.

"No," replied Melrose, positively. "I do not wish to say anything more about the matter."

Morgan began to whistle a popular tune, and one by one the lads withdrew. As it was Lysle's room in which the affair occurred, he soon found himself alone.

"I must take better care of that temper of mine," he mused, as he sat there. "It will get me into trouble some day if I do not look out. In another second I should have struck Arthur. But after all, he was very aggravating. His comments were in frightful taste. Perhaps he couldn't see how they appeared to me, though. Was I too sensitive? If I had made the same remarks about a sister of his, would he have liked it, I wonder? I've half a notion to apologize to him the first time we meet. The only trouble is he might receive it badly. No, on the whole, I think I won't say anything."

He took up one of his books and began to study, but the unpleasantness of his recent altercation was too fresh in his mind to be forgotten, and he made little progress with his task. Presently he put the volume away, and gave himself up to reverie.

Carlysle and Stanley Melrose were the sons of two brothers, both of whom had died in youth, leaving their only children to the care of such guardians as the court might appoint. The boys were, as the reader may have already surmised, quite different in their mental make-up and habits of thought. Stanley, who was now sixteen, had already developed a tendency to careful expenditure of his allowance, and was known to be saving up a good part of it,

some of which he loaned to his fellow pupils at usurious rates. No occasion was important enough in his eyes to justify a gift of money or other thing of pecuniary value, and the occasional subscription papers that were passed about the academy never bore his name. To the charge of meanness he had the ever ready answer that if others were as careful of what they possessed, there would be no necessity for charity. He was a bright scholar, seldom missing anything in his lessons, or violating any of the rules of the school. His intention was to be a lawyer. He never was known to have trouble with either teachers or pupils, and his habits were such that no fault could be found with them. And yet not a scholar at Brooks Academy was less liked than he.

Lysle's character can be easiest described by saying that he was almost everything that his cousin was not. He was so careless with his expenses, and so generous with his gifts, that he was always in arrears financially, and very often heavily in debt to his more prudent cousin. His good nature got him into innumerable scrapes. Several times he was on the point of being sent away in disgrace, but the universal fondness for him stood him in good stead. There was nothing really wicked about the lad, and this his preceptors soon came to know. The nearest he ever came to being expelled was when he took upon himself the offence of one of the other boys, a very grave one, which it was hard for the authorities to overlook, and perhaps I cannot introduce him better than by giving a short history of that affair.

"Don't you say a word," he had said to the real culprit, when he found that the investigation that

had been set on foot would surely result in his detection unless some one confessed. "I know if you are turned out of this academy you will have to go to work, and won't be allowed to finish your education, while if I am expelled my guardian will only send me to some other institution. Keep quiet, and they will never suspect you."

The sinner protested that he should not allow Lysle to do anything of the kind, but his fear at the punishment in store was too great, and when the boys were appealed to in the great hall to tell who had perpetrated the mischief, young Melrose stood up in his place. "Do you know the penalty?" asked the old professor, his voice shaking with emotion.

"Yes, sir."

"Master Melrose," said the professor, "will remain after the rest are dismissed."

The principal of the academy, Professor Wilson, had had charge of boys for forty years, and he was quick to notice things. The astonishment of the other lads at Lysle's confession, the gasp that had issued from the throat of the real culprit, and the sad looks of the entire school as they marched out, some with tears in their eyes, were not lost on him. When he was alone with Lysle he did not immediately speak. They sat regarding each other with expressions of mingled regret and esteem.

"The penalty of the offence which you have confessed is expulsion," said the old professor, at last.

"I know it, sir," said Lysle, unflinchingly.

"Shall you not be sorry to leave this academy?"

"Very sorry, sir."

"What do you expect to do next?"

"I hope to go to another one with the least possible delay."

"If they knew your record here, do you think they would care to receive you?" asked the professor, searchingly.

"Perhaps not, sir."

"Supposing they asked you the cause of your leaving Brooks?"

Lysle hesitated.

"You would not lie to them?" said the professor, altering the form of his question for greater effect.

"I do not think I would, sir. But I would not need to tell everything."

"Lysle," said the professor, kindly, "would you think it right to tell a lie—a downright lie—under any circumstances?"

The boy hesitated again.

"I cannot answer you, sir."

"Cannot answer me!" exclaimed his questioner, in mock surprise. "If you had committed a breach of the rules of this academy, for instance, would you lie to save yourself?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"Or would you allow any one else to lie for you?"

The boy was very ill at ease. For the first time he could not look the professor in the face.

"I know a boy," continued Professor Wilson, "who has allowed another boy to shoulder an offence that belongs to him. What ought to be done to a boy like that?"

Lysle looked up and saw that he could no longer conceal his secret.

"You do not need to punish two for the offence of one," said he, with deep earnestness. "Expel the boy who has confessed the guilt. The other may have a mother at home who will feel his disgrace very keenly. He may have a step-father who will be

only too glad of an excuse to take him from school and put him at work. The punishment of expulsion which to the one will be only a slight delay in his education may mean endless torment to the other. I know your kind heart, sir, and I am sure you cannot hesitate."

"Has Dudley Morgan a step-father?" asked the professor, wiping his glasses. He had had a step-father himself.

Lysle did not answer. He was appalled at the mention of the name, which he had not supposed the professor knew.

"You have told me a falsehood" said the professor.

Still Lysle was silent.

"May I go now, sir?" he asked, presently.

The professor was in a great quandary. He did not wish to expel this lad, whom he had learned to love almost with the affection of a father, and what he had just learned of Morgan's home-life made him hesitate in his case, also. After a moment's thought he touched a bell, and when a servant responded he said, "Send Master Morgan here."

The room was very still for a minutes after that. When Morgan appeared he wore a look of deep distress.

"Do you know anything, Morgan, about the matter of which I asked my pupils this morning?" was the professor's direct question.

"Why do you do this?" queried Lysle, quickly. "I have confessed everything. I am ready to take my expulsion. Excuse me, Professor Wilson, but this is hardly fair."

The professor looked at Morgan.

"You heard my question?" he said.

"Yes, sir," was the trembling reply, "and I am very glad you asked it, sir. I did the whole of the mischief myself. I have been a coward to allow Lysle to take the blame, but it is all over now. I shall have to go to work in the mill, which I hate, but I couldn't have stayed here if he had been punished in my place. He knew my situation, and he persuaded me to let him take the blame, before I had time to reflect. I am very glad it's over, sir, and I hope you won't blame him too much."

The professor had to take off his glasses again and wipe them. They had somehow grown so misty that he could see nothing at all with them.

"Lying is a terrible vice," he said, finally, to Melrose. "I shall forgive you this one offence, if you show due regret. You are sorry for the falsehood, I have no doubt?"

"No, I am not, sir," replied Lysle, firmly.

"W—what!" was the astonished reply.

"No, sir. And I want to ask you now, sir, whether you are going to expel Dudley. Because, if you are,"—he spoke very slowly and distinctly—"I shall not stay."

"W—what? What's this?" stammered the professor.

"His step-father is a mean old skinflint," pursued Melrose, rapidly. "He has taken all the money his own father left, and Dudley will never get a cent of it, and now he would like mighty well to have him turned out of school so as to give him an excuse to set him to work. But I will stop that. I shall have a good deal of money coming to me when I am twenty-one, and I can get enough in some way to keep him going. And if you turn him out of this academy, why, he and I will go to a new one

together, and I shall pay the bills. You may as well understand that now !"

Morgan stood with his eyes very wide open, for this little plan of Lysle's was entirely new to him.

"You—you will both go to your rooms," was the professor's mandate, as soon as he could recover sufficiently from his astonishment to say anything. "I will decide both your cases later."

When they had gone, the professor walked up and down the room for an hour with his hands behind him in deep study. Every few minutes he took off his glasses and wiped them. He was a great stickler for forms, and he meant to do a good many things when he began his walk. Order in the academy had been seriously threatened. He felt that something must be done to prevent a recurrence of the offenses.

Months had gone by, however, at the date this story opens, and he had never quite made up his mind what to do.

CHAPTER II.

EXAMINING THE BABY.

One incident in the life of a boy may give as clear an insight into his character as a long dissertation. Carlysle Melrose had his faults—indeed, many of them—but he had not learned to do anything contemptible up to the time he was fourteen years of age. Boys often change after that, but the deepest marks are usually indented before that age. There are early signs in the child that show what we may expect of the man.

Half an hour after Lysle's quarrel with Arthur Peck, detailed in the preceding chapter, his cousin Stanley entered his room. He, too, had just learned of the peculiar will of their relation, and he came to talk about it. Stanley had not a very great idea of Lysle's judgment in a matter of this kind, or any other, for that matter, but he was the only person available with whom there was any use of discussing it and wanted to see what he had to say.

"You've heard from Janet Steiner, haven't you?" were his first words.

"Yes," was Lysle's reply. "I received a letter about an hour ago."

"What do you think of it?"

"I was sorry to hear that Vandenhoff was dead. I supposed him a man in the best of health, who was likely to outlive all the rest of us. It is quite a shock to get news of that kind, when one has no preparation."

Stanley assented quietly to this, but did not seem particularly impressed.

"He has left you and me partial guardians of his child, it seems. I wonder what the law is about our rights while we are minors. I have some ideas of my own about the bringing up of children," he added, thoughtfully.

"Ah!" said Carlysle, with a look of surprise. He was used to hearing all sorts of remarkable things from his cousin, but this struck him as stranger than anything else he remembered, even from his lips.

"Yes," said Stanley. "I believe half the children are spoiled by foolish parents. A child is for a long time nothing more or less than a young animal. It should be treated during its first few years with an eye single to the developments of its physical need

As it grows older its impressions are of the greatest importance. Yet who pays any attention to these matters? Usually it is petted and spoiled to begin with, its health is broken before it is ten years old, its knowledge of the world is gained at hap-hazard, and the result is unpleasantly visible in the peculiar people we see around us."

Lysle looked at his cousin with an air of awe. He could not understand how any one could be as wise at sixteen as Stanley was.

"I do not know what the law is," continued Stanley, "but I am going to find out. If I am to be held partially responsible for the future of this child, I want to put my theories in practice from the start. Miss Steiner may be a very excellent woman, but an old maid is constitutionally incompetent to bring up any child, without assistance and advice from others."

He might have seen sixty years instead of sixteen, judging by the way he spoke.

"I had an idea," said Carlysle, unconsciously quoting Luke Woodstock, "that the intent of the will might be to leave the—what you would call the 'bringing up' of the little girl to Miss Steiner, because—well, because she is a woman—and the management of the property interests to us, because—because we are, or are going to be, men. It must be divided up some such way as that, I should think, to prevent any disagreement among the guardians."

Stanley Melrose tried to conceal the contempt that he felt for this proposition, not to say for its author, behind a strange smile.

"Money is much less important to a young person than character," he said. "It is comparatively easy to keep a lot of cash productively invested, but

the developing of a young mind requires the deepest thought and the most uncompromising firmness. I do not know of anything that would have given me more pleasure than to learn of this trust. I only hope I shall not be prevented entering upon its duties until I am twenty-one. The first years of a child's life—especially of a girl's—are everything. If I have to wait till I am of age she will be six years old before I can exert my authority."

"And eight before I can say a word," smiled Lysle. "Quite a young lady."

"Miss Steiner is to arrive in America within a fortnight," continued Lysle. "We shall then know the full text of the will, and be able to tell what our rights are. Mr. Vandenhoff was very kind to leave us such handsome presents," he added, after a momentary pause.

Stanley shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"You cannot call them presents," said he, "if, as seems to be the case, the money is given in place of fees for administering upon his estate and caring for his daughter. I hope I have not the vice of ingratitude to answer for, but it appears to me that he has not been over-generous, considering what he asks in return of me—of us, I should say. Surely the sum he gives you is beggarly enough. Though, perhaps," he suggested, guardedly, "he did not expect as much of you as he did of me. You certainly ought not to do as much for five thousand dollars as I for three times that sum," he concluded.

A mischievous thought came at that moment into the head of the other.

"On that basis Miss Steiner ought to do nearly twice as much as you," he said. "She will have her hands well occupied."

"Oh," replied Stanley, with a half sneer, "we can't reckon her bequest on the same basis as ours. You and I shall have something coming to us when we are of age. She probably has nothing. She will have to assume the nominal guardianship of the child, of course, and we shall have to assent to everything, I suppose. I wonder if she is tractable," he added. "She could make things very uncomfortable, if she were inclined."

There did not seem to be much more to say on the subject until more information was obtained, and the conversation of the cousins drifted into other channels.

"Do you still think you shall be a lawyer?" asked Lysle, presently.

"Yes, there is nothing more profitable, if well managed, than a good attorney's practice. And you still stick to your notion of being an artist, I suppose?"

Lysle assented.

"I'm fit for nothing else," said he. "I can draw, and mix colors, and put them on, and there isn't another thing in the world that I can do."

"Do artists make much money?" asked Stanley, musingly.

"I don't know. I hope I shall never have to sell a picture. It seems as if it were in some way a degradation to art to exchange it for gold. How much money will there be coming to me when I am of age, do you think? You have inquired, I have no doubt."

Stanley calculated mentally for several minutes.

"If it is invested as carefully as it ought to be, you will have three thousand dollars a year as long as you live. Not a great deal, is it?"

Lysle stopped to think.

"About sixty dollars a week? I can live on that.

I shall not want much—nothing but a bed-room and studio, a little canvas and my working materials. If I thought I could always paint, and paint well, and never have to part with any of my productions, I should be happy."

His cousin stared at him for some time in silence.

"What is the use of painting, unless you sell your work?" he asked. "It would be like running a mill and keeping all the goods you made."

"But pictures are not like cloth," responded Lysle. "They are the creations of the brain, the children of the mind. I should feel almost like a father who had to part with a child if I saw a painting going out of my studio. No, Stanley, I shall never sell one of my pictures unless I am driven to it by necessity, and if I can have sixty dollars a week, I shall get along very well."

The other shrugged his shoulders in doubt.

"But when you marry," he said, "the sum will not seem so large. Women are expensive creatures, you know."

"I shall never marry," replied Lysle, firmly.

Stanley smiled.

"You will marry," said he, "before you are twenty two."

Lysle looked much interested.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because you are all sentiment. You do things without due thought. You cannot tell this minute what you will do in an hour from now. A boy who would run the risk of being expelled, as you did in that matter of Dudley Morgan's, would do any other foolish thing."

Lysle flushed a little, but he was not offended at his cousin's words.

"I am not sorry that I did that," he answered. "It looks as if it had all blown over, doesn't it? You don't know the trouble it would have caused Dudley had he been sent away in disgrace. But that is quite different from marrying. I shall be so attached to my art that I can think of nothing else. I can hardly wait till the day comes when I am to start for Europe."

"How long shall you remain abroad?"

"Four years or more. If I am as pleased as I expect to be, I may reside there altogether. After I have completed my studies at Paris I should like to settle down in one of those sleepy old towns in Italy that I have read of, and do nothing but paint all the rest of my life."

"And what is to become of your interest in our ward, all this time?" Stanley inquired, smiling.

"Oh, the Vandenhoff baby? She must wait till she is old enough to walk and talk before she calls much on me. I shall leave her infantile days to you and Miss Steiner. You have your theories, you know, and I have none at all. When she is larger, if I return, I will try and help out in her training. I can see no other way, unless you two are willing that she should be sent to Europe when I go."

Stanley smiled again. He was much relieved to hear this. He was glad to know that Lysle would not be there to interfere with his plans in their earlier stages. He was a boy of great force of mind, and he knew it would be easier to influence Miss Steiner if she were alone than if she had Lysle to support her objections, as very likely she would have if he remained. He had an idea that Lysle

would side with a woman, merely because she was one, whether she was right or not.

The next day after this, Stanley called again on his cousin, to tell him that he had been over to a law library and read a good deal in relation to the duties of guardians, and that he felt quite sure that, under the will of Mr. Vandenhoff, Miss Steiner would have to consult with her colleagues on everything of importance in relation to her charge, even though they were under the legal age.

"You only want to stick to me, Lysle, and we will have an understanding from the start," said he.

To this Lysle good-naturedly assented, and when, one day, news was brought that Miss Steiner was in New York and would like to meet the Melrose cousins, the two boys went to the place appointed, under an implied agreement to stand by each other, in case of any difference of opinion. This meant nothing more nor less than a victory in advance for Stanley, if Lysle had only been wise enough to understand it.

Miss Steiner welcomed them so cordially, and with such an entire absence of formality, that all parties were placed immediately at their ease. They found her a very quiet lady, of refined appearance, of medium height, dark complexion and well rounded form. The most noticeable thing about her was an expression which denoted that she had passed through severe suffering, and there was a marked constraint visible in her manner, which Stanley immediately accredited to her spinsterhood. She met the cousins in a small private parlor of the St. Nicholas Hotel, at which she was staying.

"You have both received my letters, doubtless," she said after alluding in the briefest possible man-

ner to the loss they had sustained in the death of their kinsman.

"Yes," replied Stanley, who naturally assumed the position of spokesman.

"Very likely you thought some of the provisions of Mr. Vandenhoff's will strange ones."

"They are not of the usual kind," said Stanley, "but I see nothing unreasonable in them. He seems to have intended to provide care for his child under all probable contingencies. I think he made a very wise will."

Miss Steiner looked at the lad with great interest. She had heard that he was far in advance of most boys of his age, but she was hardly prepared for this speech.

"You have thought—very likely," she went on, after a pause, "of some plans in relation to Rosalie."

Rosalie! So that was the child's name, was it? Lysle was sure that he liked the selection. Stanley was sure that he did not.

"I—I have thought of some things," replied Stanley, rousing himself from the reverie into which the mention of the child's name had thrown him.

"In the first place, it seems to us—to Lysle and me—that we can all get along without the intervention of outsiders in this matter. We two are, of course, under age, and legally have no rights to assume a guardianship of this kind in the face of opposition, should there be any. But, as between ourselves, being relations and friends, we ought not to have any disagreement. My idea—and Lysle's—is that we ought to go on, just as if we were both twenty-one, and assume the duties given to us. Have you the original of the will with you, or a copy?"

Miss Steiner had a copy, which she produced. Stanley found nothing in it to alter the conclusion to which he had come.

"I am interested to hear what you have to say," said Miss Steiner, "and I agree with you in one thing, at least, the undesirability of having other parties interfering in our affairs. If we can get along together without friction, I shall be delighted to escape any appeal to the law, beyond what is necessary to give me the right to collect and pay moneys on the estate—subject to your approval, of course," she added, noting the doubt that had at once manifested itself in Stanley's face. "Now, tell me frankly just what you wish to do, and we shall soon see whether there is any vital difference in our ideas."

Stanley paused a full minute before replying, during which Lysle arose and took a walk up and down the apartment.

"I cannot tell you off-hand," said the elder lad, at last, "all I should wish. The child ought, of course, to remain in your control, if you are willing to assume that responsibility, until she is a good deal older than she is now. You have an attendant for her, I presume?"

Miss Steiner bowed.

"There can be nothing about which we could clash for the present," he said, thoughtfully. "As she grows older—but then, before that happens I shall be of age to assume my full rights without question."

Miss Steiner looked at him in some alarm, as if she felt apprehensive that these expressions would prove the groundwork of something serious in the dim future, but she controlled herself, and turned pleasantly to the other lad.

"And you, Lysle? Have you any different theories to advance?"

"No," he answered almost bashfully. "I do not think I shall make you much trouble. But where is the baby? I think we ought to see our ward before discussing her much longer. Perhaps," he added, with a bright smile, "she may have some ideas of her own about the summary way she is being disposed of."

Miss Steiner called a maid, who soon brought in a little bundle of dry goods, in the centre of which was the cause of all this conclave. I am not going to describe Miss Rosalie as she appeared on that occasion, except to say that she looked much like other happy and healthy babies approaching one year of age. One thing I must note, however: She won the heart of Master Carlysle Melrose on the spot, and before any one knew what he meant to do, he had taken her from the girl's arms into his own.

Both the nurse and Miss Steiner viewed this act with proper consternation, but Lysle assured them that he would exercise great care and they were fain to appear content. He was one of Rosalie's guardians, and had a right to take her in his arms if he liked.

"She is a well child, I should think," remarked Stanley, wondering how his cousin could have the depraved taste to wish to hold such a mite as that.

"Extremely so," was Miss Steiner's reply. "She has three teeth"—Lysle, who had just found them, corroborated the report—"and has hardly been ill a day since her birth."

"How old was she when her mother died?" asked Stanley.

Miss Steiner started at the question.

"Only a—a—few days," she said, in a low voice.

"Did her father expect to die soon, when he made the will?"

"No."

Miss Steiner's agitation was evident, and Lysle wondered that Stanley should continue his questions.

"That accounts for the odd provisions," mused the elder Melrose. "He doubtless believed we would reach full age before we should have its duties to perform."

"Yes, that is probably true," assented Miss Steiner.

"Do you intend remaining in America?"

"For the present."

"I should not like to have the child go away too far," said Stanley, "speaking for myself."

For an instant she was on the point of making a sharp reply to this statement, but she repressed herself, as she had done before. She was very sure now that she did not like the author of it, and she feared she should like him less as the years rolled on.

She turned to Lysle.

"You are both at school, I believe," she said to him.

"Yes, but I shall finish at the end of this term. I'm going to be an artist, and I shall go to Paris to study."

"What about your little ward, while you are away?" she asked kindly.

"Oh, the baby?" he asked, looking up from the

face upon which he had been inducing a succession of smiles for the last five minutes. "I think I shall be willing to trust her to you. She is a very sweet child," he added, resigning her to the nurse, "and I am proud of my new dignities."

After they had gone, Miss Steiner took Rosalie from the nurse again and held her for a long time in her lap.

"We shall have trouble with that Stanley Melrose —you and I," she said. "How different he is from his cousin! And Lysle is going to Paris—Paris, that wicked city, with no one to guide his young steps. An artist! I could have told it by his face. What will they do in Paris, with that nice boy, Rosalie? Will they destroy all the goodness in him, as they did of—? Will they receive him with a soul as pure as an angel's and send him back with it blackened beyond recognition? If we could keep him with us, Rosalie, and never let him leave our sight till he is strong enough to bear temptation! Ah, Rosalie, if we could only do that!"

CHAPTER III.

"PARIS IS A WICKED CITY."

When the term at Brooks Academy was finished, both of the Melrose boys left that institution of learning, Stanley to enter Columbia College, and Lysle to take his European course in the art schools. Stanley, though barely seventeen years of age, was well advanced and had no difficulty in passing the neces-

sary examination prescribed by the college. Lysle could not obtain the usual diploma of graduation, but cared little for it, as he did not mean to devote himself much more to the mere book-studies. He had drawn ever since he was big enough to hold a pencil, and all of his dreams were in the direction of painting. He could hardly wait for the day when he should set sail across the Atlantic toward those lands where the artist finds, and seems likely to find for many generations yet to come, his best inspiration.

The leave-taking of the other students from the cousins was of a widely different nature. Stanley got no more than a formal good-bye from either teachers or pupils. It was all that he wanted, so he experienced no disappointment. But the parting with Lysle was another affair entirely. He was a general favorite, and all felt that his leaving would be a genuine loss to the good-fellowship of the school. From the old principal, Professor Wilson, who had had the talk with him that day when he told his lie for Morgan, down to the latest arrival, there was gloom at the prospect of his departure. Dudley felt as badly as any of them, for Lysle had proved himself a friend to the unlucky boy on more occasions than one, and he could conjure up nothing but trouble when removed from his watchful care.

"You can give me just a week to stay here after the next term begins," he said to Lysle, dolefully. "The professors are all down on me and only waiting to get a chance to expel me."

"But it all lies with you to prevent them, Dud'" replied Lysle. "You mustn't give them the chance."

"You'll see," replied Morgan, shaking his head,

"I sha'n't do anything at all, but they'll get on to me just the same."

Lysle gave him all the encouragement he could, and they agreed to correspond with each other.

"If you get into any trouble, which you mustn't, you know, you will tell me all about it," said Lysle. "You will never be without a friend while I live, Dudley."

Luke Woodstock was sorry to have him go, too, but Luke did not express his feelings as freely as some boys. He contented himself with wishing the lad good luck, and predicting that he would one day see his name high up on the scroll of famous artists. Arthur Peck said good-bye in a quiet way. He had never acted quite as warmly toward Lysle since that day when they had the little difference. It occurred to Lysle several times to say that he hoped there were no hard feelings, but there seemed no real occasion for it. He did not wish to do injustice to any one, and he did not think he had done so to Arthur. These were the boys with whom he had had the closest acquaintance in the academy, and the parting with them was the only unpleasant thing in his contemplated journey. He thought nothing of leaving Stanley. They had never sustained intimate relations. As cousins who were in charge of the same guardian, they were frequently brought in contact with each other, but there was no close fellowship. The will of Mr. Vandenhoff was the only thing that made it likely they would meet much after their school days at Brooks were over.

The cousins went to New York together. Both had to see their guardian there, and they also had to pay a visit to Miss Steiner and her charge. Mr. Dennin, their trustee, was a pleasant old gentleman

who had always let them do exactly as they pleased. When Lysle told him that he wished to be an artist and go to Paris he assented quite as a matter of course. When Stanley made known his preference for Columbia, stating that he meant to be a lawyer, he approved of the proposition without a word. Had the boy decided to become a horse jockey, Mr. Dennin would probably have been quite as well satisfied. But when the lads confided to him the contents of their cousin Vandenhoff's will, he was obliged to laugh outright, the first and only time, it is believed, in his entire life.

"And so you are to have the bringing up of a baby?" he said, to Stanley; and he seemed to find the idea vastly amusing.

"Yes, sir," responded Stanley, with due dignity He could see nothing to laugh at, and he meant to impress Mr. Dennin with that fact. "That is, Miss Steiner, Lysle and I together will have it to do. But as Lysle is to go away for some years, and as Miss Steiner is a—a woman—the responsibility will devolve very largely upon me."

"The lady is the only one of the party who is of legal age," suggested Mr. Dennin. "She is entirely willing, is she, to accept your suggestions?"

"It seems so," replied Stanley. "The only alternative would be to turn everything over to somebody like you until I am twenty-one. And that would be of no advantage, you know."

He was delighted at the chance to give his guardian a rap in exchange for the one he had inadvertently received, so long as he could accomplish it in this guarded manner.

"Exactly," said Mr. Dennin, growing entirely sober. "You will get along famously, I have no

doubt. It is a great responsibility, though, this bringing up of a girl. I—no, I don't think anything would make me accept such a trust."

Stanley looked wiser than ever.

"It is a common error," said he, "to consider the training of a girl as such a different thing from that of a boy. There are a great many silly notions prevailing about the radical difference of the sexes. Now, my idea is that they are for all practical purposes identical."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Dennin, thrown momentarily off his guard.

Lysle looked and listened, thinking what a very wise man his cousin would become at the rate he was going on.

"Children, be they boys or girls," pursued Stanley, "should be brought up exactly alike. They should have plenty of physical training. We should be sure that their bodies are sound before we try to cram their heads full of learning. The way that girls are handicapped, under the system generally in vogue, unfits them for their place in life. They are petted, made to act unnatural, given a surfeit of bonbons and taught superfluities before they have any idea of essentials. For their first ten years they are nothing whatever but little animals, and should be treated accordingly."

Lysle was thinking of the dainty bundle of linen and lace that he had taken in his arms at Miss Steiner's. He was not quite sure that he liked to hear Stanley speak of Rosalie as a "little animal."

"You refer to the place of a girl in life," said Mr. Dennin, wonderingly. "What *is* her place? Perhaps you have new ideas on that subject, too."

"It *should* be her place to be of use," was the

instant reply. "It should *not* be her place to act the part of a doll. Nature has made her with legs—she ought to be able to walk miles without fatigue by the time she is five. She has been given arms—she ought to strengthen them as boys do, and not keep them for exhibition in some parlor or opera box. Look at the fashionable girls of to-day, and tell me what they are good for. Their gentlemen escorts carry their smallest parcels to and from the carriages in which they languidly recline when out of their houses. A maid dresses and undresses them. Upon the slightest exertion they are overcome with fatigue. I maintain that girls are naturally as strong as boys, that they can, in fact, bear greater hardships than their brothers if properly trained. Give me the first ten years of this child we are talking about, let me direct her as I desire, and I will show you a contrast to what you will find in any other house with which you are acquainted."

Mr. Dennin wanted to say that he did not doubt that, but he did not wish to offend his ward. Stanley was the kind of fellow that it was as well to keep on good terms with.

"If you stay in Europe ten years, Lysle," continued Stanley, turning to his cousin, "I will show you a paragon of strength and muscle when you return. She shall then match her strength with any boy of her age and come off victorious. She shall be able not only to ride a horse, but to catch and mount him. *I* could do it when *I* was ten. She shall be able to hit a bull's-eye at forty paces with a revolver. *I* could. And when she is eighteen, if a man speaks insultingly to her she will neither faint, scream nor run away. She will give him one blow between the eyes that will make him food for the

ambulance wagon. *I* can do it; why shouldn't *she*?"

Lysle was obliged to admit to himself that Stanley said this very well, and he had no doubt that the theory was a correct one, for he knew Stanley to be a very wise boy. But it puzzled him some to imagine all these things of the baby he had seen laughing up at him in Miss Steiner's parlor.

"What are the women of to-day good for?" demanded the young reformer. "Can you tell me?"

"No—I am sure—that is—I really don't know," stammered Mr. Dennin, who was a bachelor.

"I have heard of them being utilized as wives," put in Lysle, who thought he ought to come to the rescue in some way.

"Wives!" sneered Stanley. "Yes, they are wives, and look at them! Did you ever examine any of them critically?"

Lysle hastened to say that he had not.

"Nine-tenths of them are invalids, in one form or other," said his cousin. "Thirty per cent. either die or are broken in health for life with their first child. The way they are raised, their lack of physical training, and their bad diet, is responsible, and in a few years the world will come to realize it. Then, if the race is not too far gone for repair, there will be a reaction and we shall have an era of healthy wives and mothers. I am going to begin with this girl now."

Neither Lysle nor Mr. Dennin had any thought of answering these statements. The extent of Stanley's knowledge paralyzed both of them.

After finishing their business at their guardian's, which did not take very long, the boys sought Miss Steiner again. She was still staying at the hotel where they had first seen her—the St. Nicholas.

Three months had passed and the baby was able to creep about the floors and to utter certain sounds which were supposed to have definite meanings. Lysle stayed only long enough for a formal leave-taking, as it was settled that he should start without delay for France. Miss Steiner evinced unmistakable regret at the news of his early departure, but he promised to write often, she in turn agreeing to inform him of the progress which his young ward made, from month to month. She wanted to say a good deal more to him, but she was embarrassed by Stanley's presence. She wished in her heart that he was not going, for she liked him extremely well, but there was no help for it and she did not think it wise to reveal her thoughts.

Stanley remained that day after Lysle departed, and set about conveying some of his ideas to his co-guardian.

"Miss Rosalie will have a good deal of money, will she not?" was his first question.

"Quite a fortune," responded Miss Steiner. "It is all in first-class securities, and foots up nearly two hundred thousand dollars in American money."

He asked to see the list of assets and she went at once and brought it to him. She had deposited the securities with a trust company and showed him the receipt. He looked them over with the eye of a connoisseur, and asked in relation to the present value of some of those of foreign issue.

"They will hardly average over four per cent.," was his closing comment. "That is too little as things go here. I should advise that these German and English stocks be sold, and the proceeds reinvested in American concerns."

Miss Steiner ventured to remark that Mr. Van-

denhoff had always consulted absolute safety rather than the highest income. But to this Stanley replied that a higher return than four per cent. was possible with securities that were entirely gilt-edged. He said it was the duty of a trustee to take the best care of the property entrusted to him, and that it would be criminal to allow it to earn less than the highest amount that care and diligence could secure. The lady was astonished at his apparent knowledge on these subjects, and not over-pleased at his patronizing way of imparting his information, but she had determined to avoid any open rupture if possible, and she told him that if he would make out a list of the changes in the investments that he proposed she would take time to decide about accepting them. He had no greater desire than she that there should be any falling out, and though it continually occurred to him that she was "only a woman," he let it go as she suggested.

His notions about the physical training of young girls were not touched upon at this interview. He realized instinctively that this was a matter which he would have to approach guardedly, as Miss Steiner would very likely claim that it was an invasion of a field which should be entirely her own. He saw that the mite of humanity that was creeping about the floor, and pulling herself up by the chairs and ottomans, seemed in a fairly healthy condition. But her clothing was not what he wanted it to be—there were too many encumbrances about her feet, and she wore what he considered too great a weight of goods for the hardening process he believed it was not too soon to begin. Then it distressed him to see the little German nurse come and snatch the child up and cover her tiny mouth with

kisses. Didn't the young idiot know that nothing was more unhealthy for babies than to kiss them on the mouth? He did not dare ask yet where the child slept, but he thought it as likely as not that she occupied the same bed as either her foster-mother or nurse, and he fairly shivered He was going to remain in New York now most of the time, and would see Miss Steiner often. These things should be regulated in time.

"It must be rather dear, living at the hotel, for three of you," he suggested. "What part of the expense do you think it right to charge to the child?"

It was very ill advised to broach the subject in that manner, but Stanley could not at all understand that. Things financial seemed proper to him at all times and under all circumstances.

Miss Steiner flushed violently, and her indignation got the best of her for a moment.

"What part? *All* of it!" she answered, with an air that strongly resembled defiance. "Rosalie has an income of at least $8,000. She has been left in my charge, and I do not intend to desert her. All the expense here is properly a part of her legitimate needs. It will come a good deal under her income, and I think any competent authority will admit that it is right she should pay it."

He hastened to mollify her.

"I did not say it was not, Miss Steiner. I only inquired, as I supposed I was at liberty to do."

She saw that he had the advantage and hastened to assure him that she had meant nothing by her words.

"I thought," she said, "that you intended to insinuate—"

"I never insinuate," he interrupted. "When I have a statement to make I always do so openly. There will be questions that I shall feel it my duty to ask you, from time to time. There will be things I shall consider it my prerogative to suggest. I trust they will always be received in good part, as they will certainly be offered. We have but one desire, I hope, and that is to bring up our charge so that she shall be a credit to us. When we differ upon methods, or upon matters of administration, we ought not to allow ourselves to become angry."

She had entirely recovered her equanimity, and said she was not angry, which Stanley said he fully believed. But there did not seem to be anything more to talk about at the time, and the conference came to a rather sudden close.

"I can feel," said Miss Steiner to herself, after he had gone, "that we are going to have a hard time of it before we are through. When I found that Max had left Rosalie in the care of those two boys and myself I thought I should have her practically under my own care for the first five or six years. I almost wish that I had appealed at once to the courts and had an older person appointed, but perhaps that would have been no better. Stanley would have been indignant at it, and when he did come of age he would have managed in some way to get his revenge. There is a quiet, cold relentlessness about him, that makes one feel as if he could turn the handle of a vise without mercy if once he got an enemy's finger caught in it. And how totally different is his cousin. I must manage to see him before he sails, even if it is only for a few moments."

Lysle had told her that he was going aboard the steamer that night, as it was expected to start at a

very early hour on the following morning. She waited till after nine o'clock, and then was driven in a hired carriage to the dock. A messenger reported that Mr. Melrose was in the cabin, chatting with some of the officers, and she asked that he be told of her presence.

"I was out driving," she said, with slight prevarication, when he appeared, "and thought I might get a moment for another good-bye with you."

"You are very kind," he responded, heartily. "Won't you come aboard a few minutes? I should like to show you how nicely I am quartered."

She consented, after a slight demur, and went with him to his state-room. The next few minutes were taken up with directions in case of sea-sickness and advice as from one who had crossed the ocean several times. But, while listening with due attention to all she said, Lysle was fully aware that it was not to tell him these things that she had come down to the steamer.

"How soon do you expect to be in Paris?" she asked, finally.

"Within a month. I go to Liverpool first, then to London, stopping at a few places on the way, and then to France."

"Your arrangements in relation to your new home are all made, I think you told me?"

"Not exactly that. The master of whom I shall take my first lessons will guide me to a *pension*. I shall begin the study of the language at once, and being in a house where they speak nothing else will help me a great deal. I shall have to rely on myself, though, in case of an emergency."

She regarded him with newly born affection

"And you will have no relation there, no mother, no sister?" she mused, sadly.

"Oh, as for that," he answered, cheerfully, "I have none here, either."

Miss Steiner spoke with much feeling.

"It seems terrible that you are going to Paris with no restraining influences about you. I do not see what Mr. Dennin is thinking of."

Lysle did not intend to have her sadness communicate itself to him.

"Mr. Dennin!" he echoed. "He has let me do as I pleased ever since he took charge of my father's estate. Probably," he added, smiling, "my good conduct thus far has encouraged him to trust me still farther."

She put a hand on his shoulder and spoke impressively.

"Paris is a wicked city, Lysle. Its temptations are a hundred times greater than you would encounter here. Be careful, won't you? You know what wrong is, young as you are. I cannot talk to you as I should like, but you understand me. Live an upright life. It may be years before I shall see you again. Do nothing that you would be unwilling I should know."

She had become very earnest, and the tears stood full in her eyes. The light-hearted boy felt all that she meant him to feel, and when she stopped suddenly and imprinted a kiss upon his cheek, it impressed him as nothing had ever done before. He did not answer her directly in words, but he had an attitude of attention that satisfied her.

"Good-bye," she said, fearing to trust herself to say more.

"Good-bye," he answered, brightly. "Take good care of Rosalie."

She smiled at that, wiping away the tears lest some one in the cabin should notice them.

"You are fifteen," she said.

"Yes, and Stanley is seventeen."

She winced at the word "Stanley."

"You need not write to him that I came to see you here."

"I won't," he answered, and she was gone as quickly as she came.

CHAPTER IV.

A NEVER CEASING PRESSURE.

Slowly and ingeniously Stanley Melrose carried his points with Miss Janet Steiner, in relation to the manner in which the little Rosalie should be dressed, exercised and fed. He brought books on physical culture, on diet and on anatomical development, which she felt compelled to read. He took her to lectures on the same subjects, which seemed to have a basis of good sense. But what won the day was neither the books nor the lectures. It was the steady persistency of the young fellow, a never ceasing pressure of the kind that causes the roots of the elm to lift a heavy wall out of its place and topple down a building.

There may be readers of this story who will cavil at the picture of a lad of seventeen exercising this influence over the mind of a woman of twenty-five.

There is a great difference, however, between lads of seventeen. Young Melrose was no ordinary boy His father had made him a companion up to the time of his death, which had occurred but four years previous to that of Mr. Vandenhoff. A good deal of his infancy had been passed on the plains, where the elder Melrose was engaged in the capacity of Indian agent. There he had learned the athletic habits of the Redmen and the frontiersmen, and when, at the age of ten, he had left that life to assume that of a student in one of the Eastern schools, he surprised every one by the facility with which he imbibed the lore of books. In less than seven years from the day when he first entered school, with hardly any knowledge of the things taught there except reading and writing, he was ready for college. His brain and body were both powerful. He had no sick days to put him back ; no struggling with exhausted energies. He knew but one method in life in dealing with obstacles, and that was to overcome them. It might be done in some cases by force, in others diplomacy was better, but it must always be done.

Janet Steiner had been left, like the other principal characters in this tale, an orphan at an early age. She had gone through boarding-school life in somewhat straightened circumstances, and upon her graduation had taught children in the homes of wealthy people, who knew very well that she was forced to be dependent, and treated her with patronizing kindness. Her soul rebelled in those days against the uncongeniality of her surroundings, and it was with positive pleasure that she accepted an invitation to take charge of two girls who were to spend several years in Europe, acquiring the modern languages and other accomplishments. When this

engagement came to an end, and the prospect of another term in some one's aristocratic home loomed disagreeably before her, the opportunity was given her to become a part of the family of Mr. Vandenhoff.

She worshiped the little Rosalie. Nothing that she believed injurious to the child in any sense would have been permitted. Stanley gained his points by convincing her that what he favored was best, and as the infant continued to manifest most remarkable progress, Miss Steiner soon came to follow his advice without protest or evasion.

In three months after Lysle sailed for Europe, Stanley had succeeded in making her almost as much horrified as himself when Gretchen kissed the baby on the mouth or tossed her up in the air to make her throw out her little arms and crow with delight. He had rightly guessed that she occupied the same bed with her nurse, and he saw that this was stopped. A little crib expressly for her was provided, not cramped at all in its area, and yet not large enough for any one else to get into it under any circumstances whatever. A number of changes were also made in her clothing, which, while they certainly did not add to the attractiveness of her appearance, gave greater freedom to her limbs and more room for the expansion of her chest.

When his college term opened Stanley engaged a room at the St. Nicholas for himself, and took up his home there. The room was one on the top floor, selected partly on account of greater economy, though, as he said, it was also the best part of the house for study. He was thus enabled to drop in at the Steiner apartments at almost any part of the day to make sure that his directions were being carried out.

Miss Steiner was much disturbed when she first learned that he was quartered in the hotel, for he had said nothing to her of his intention until it was accomplished. It seemed as if it would put her under a sort of surveillance that would not be agreeable. But Stanley was wise enough to be very circumspect in his movements at first. He never presumed to imply that he had any special rights in the care of Rosalie, and prefixed each suggestion with, "Don't you think it would be a good idea?" or "Has it ever occurred to you?"

He had a great deal of studying to do, as he had determined if possible to take the four years' course at Columbia in three, but his methodical habits and the splendid condition of his health enabled him to accomplish all that he wished, and yet find abundant leisure to attend to the training of his little ward. His habit was to rise at six o'clock in the morning, take a walk of an hour before breakfast, arrange his day by the most systematic movements, and to retire at precisely half-past eleven. As sleep came to him within five minutes of the time he touched the pillow, and as he never woke once until the hour for rising, he had all the rest he wanted, and his health was superb.

One of the first things he began to teach the child was the Indian virtue of stoicism. As soon as she was old enough to understand him he set about inculcating into her youthful mind the lesson that nothing is to be gained by tears or bewailing. She had learned to walk at this period, but was still unsteady on her feet, and had as frequent falls as other children, with resultant bumps and bruises. On such occasions it was the habit of Miss Steiner or Gretchen, in their ignorance of the "true system,"

to run and pick her up, joining their lamentations in pretended earnestness to hers. He had watched this process several times before he felt it the part of wisdom to put in his protest.

"Would you allow me to suggest, Miss Steiner," he said, one day when they were alone, "that Rosalie would soon learn not to fret over her small injuries if you and the nurse did not act as though you thought them great ones? She fell twice on the soft rugs this afternoon and one of you ran with all speed to pick her up and sympathize with her. She cried each time much longer and louder than the extent of her hurt would have warranted. I think, hereafter, if you could bring yourself to let her entirely alone, acting as if you saw nothing worthy of notice in the affair, she would soon learn to pick herself up and go about her business. I am also inclined to the belief that it would ultimately reduce the number of her falls."

Miss Steiner listened with womanly sympathy arrayed in protest against the "heartless proposal," for so she viewed it.

"One of those times that Rosalie fell to-day," she answered, "I had to put vinegar and brown paper on the spot where she bruised herself. I should have thought it wrong not to mind a fall like that."

He smiled incredulously.

"I do not like to differ from you," said he, "but I am quite sure she would have been just as well off to-morrow morning if you had put on nothing at all. Every child is bound to have just about so many of these little bumps. It is a saying in the country that a child who does not fall out of bed before it is a year old will never amount to much in the world.

Has Rosalie ever fallen out of bed?" he asked, with a trace of humor in the question.

"Once," she admitted, "on the steamer. It was a very stormy night."

Then that danger is disposed of," replied Stanley. "Of course you don't imagine that I take any of these old fables seriously. There are women who declare that a child who looks in a mirror before it is three will die before the end of the year, and they can bring instances where children have looked in mirrors and have died. But let me urge you to try my plan the next time she falls. Just pay no attention to her, and watch the result."

Miss Steiner did not seem to favor the notion.

"She might break a bone, for all we could tell," she said.

"And so you intend to examine her all over each time she trips up?" he suggested, good-naturedly. "You will have your hands full, and besides she will never learn that self-reliance which is one of the most valuable things that a child can be taught. Think it over, Miss Steiner, think it over."

A few days after this, Stanley happened to be in the room when an accident occurred. Rosalie was toddling about from chair to chair, and in passing a small table caught at its cloth cover to steady herself. Losing her balance, but clinging still to the cover, she fell to the floor, bringing down upon her all of the contents of the table, including a vase, which was shivered with a loud crash. Miss Steiner, who was at the opposite end of the room, sprang up instinctively and was about to rush to the rescue, while Gretchen ran in from the next room with the same intention; but Stanley nonchalantly placed himself between them and the child

"I saw it all," he said, in a whisper. "She is only frightened. The vase did not touch her. It is better not to notice."

Miss Steiner controlled herself with an effort. All her instincts would have led her to catch up the child and soothe its sorrows against her breast. Perhaps she thought Stanley was right. She motioned to Gretchen to leave the room, and slowly resumed her seat, though the loud cries of the little one smote heavily on her heart.

Stanley had also become seated again and the room was in an apparent state of quietness except for the noisy babe, when Miss Rosalie found it dawning on her small brain that something unusual had happened. It was the first time in her brief recollection that she had fallen without being picked up and sympathized with, and when she got this fact clearly through her mental organism she evinced undoubted astonishment. Getting upon her feet with a celerity that proved that none of the leg bones, at least, were broken, she made her way to Stanley's chair, and proceeded to call his attention to the effects of the late catastrophe. He pretended to be so busily engaged in reading a newspaper that he could not listen to her, but when she persisted he put the journal down and gave her his attention.

"Baby fell," said Rosalie, or at least she gave utterance to sounds which, with the accompanying pantomime, conveyed that impression.

"Ah!" replied Stanley, as if it was of no special consequence; and he proceeded to resume his reading.

"Baby hurt," was the next statement, couched in similar phrase.

"All right," said Stanley, just as if she had called his attention to a new present.

This did not meet with the child's ideas at all, and to convince him that she needed sympathy she began to cry again. At this he put down the paper and looked at her as if she had done something that excited his curiosity.

Thus the game went on. Rosalie told him, in her baby way, that she had pulled the cloth off the table, and that she had been hurt in the process. And he told her that he saw that she had pulled off the cloth, and that it was not of the slightest interest to him or any one else in the world but herself. She could not speak a single intelligible English word, and she could hardly understand one, either, but he knew what she was saying to him, and she perfectly understood all his responses.

Failing to make the impression she desired in that quarter she went over to Miss Steiner, but before she could get there Stanley had called attention to the success of his plan and begged the woman not to spoil the experiment. And so the child found another newspaper reader who did not seem to feel as great an interest in the recent accident as Rosalie thought she ought. The result was that the little one soon went about her play, as if nothing had happened, to the great delight of Stanley, who exultantly called the attention of Miss Steiner to his success.

Another thing that he insisted upon, in his quiet way, was that Rosalie should have an abundance of fresh air. Whether the day was fair or foul he wanted her to pass a good deal of it out of doors. When winter came and mercury in the thermometer dropped down into the vicinity of the zero mark, he had hard work to convince Miss Steiner that it was

safe to allow her little charge to face the elements, but he had his way as usual, and the daily journeys were taken. Once, when the child caught a severe cold, he said it was the result, not of the exposure, but of the previous lack of it, and here also another of his whims came to the surface.

He would not consent that she should have a physician.

"Doctors should only be summoned in the most desperate cases," he said, oracularly. "To take a lot of drugs at such a time as this, and especially at such an age as this, would be to invite disease to become a frequent visitor. There is no way so easy to undermine the system of a little child as to put drugs into its system. That is all the doctor will do, if we call him. If he comes and we do not use his medicine, what will have been the object of sending for him? If we do use it, we shall always be sorry."

"But if anything should happen," said Miss Steiner, with alarm, "I should never forgive myself."

"Nothing will happen," he replied, "that would not happen equally with a doctor here. Follow my advice and we shall come out all right."

He thereupon with his own hands loosened Rosalie's clothing, applied water compresses, gave her a draught of hot mixture and sent her off early to sleep. That night he would not leave Miss Steiner's rooms, but watched the patient as carefully as a hired nurse or a loving mother. In the morning the child was better, and to the horror of the women he insisted that she should go out for her airing.

"Wrap her up more than you usually do," he said, "and do not keep her out as long. Open the windows

of your apartment so that it will get a thorough filling with fresh air while she is gone. It's all right, I tell you. Half the people who die of colds do so because they stifle themselves up in the house when they are or should be on the road to recovery."

She went out, and was as well as ever in a few days, and Stanley's star rose to its chiefest ascendancy. What made it doubly apparent that he was right was the sad death of another child living at the hotel, about the same time, who had been attacked with the same symptoms as Rosalie, and had been kept indoors.

From that day there was little interference with Stanley's plans. As soon as spring opened he engaged a place for the child and her wardens up the Hudson, and later in the season exchanged it for another on the seashore of New Jersey. Before the close of his school term he went to see them several times a week, and during the vacation he made his home with them. At this time he devoted a good deal of attention to the little one, staying out of doors with her nearly the whole of the day; and under his care she continued to grow healthy and ruddy and strong.

While they were at the shore he had a little bathing suit made for her and used to let her paddle in the water at the usual bathing hour. When he went in himself he would sometimes take her out where it was deep enough to float, and so thoroughly had she learned to conquer alarm that she seemed to enjoy even this strange amusement. He would hold her by the waist-band, and make her strike out with her little arms and legs until she was almost a swimmer, though only two years and a half old.

He did not in the least encourage her in her efforts

to talk, as most fond parents and guardians think it their duty to do. She understood by this time all that he felt it necessary to say to her, and she could answer "yes" and "no," which was quite sufficient. As he had said to Mr. Dennin, he regarded her at present as nothing whatever but a little animal, and one that was not kept, either, for purposes of exhibition. Miss Steiner and Gretchen may have talked "baby language" to her when in the solitude of their own chambers, but it seemed to make no impression on her mind. Stanley's mentality dominated the child as it did her elders. She soon learned to prefer him to any of them, probably because of the natural path into which he led her.

Thus passed away the first year, and the second, and the third. When Rosalie had reached the age of four years no handsomer child could have been found within a thousand miles, judged by the truest of all standards—health, form and complexion.

Stanley was now twenty years of age. He was a tall, athletic fellow, full of subdued fire, ready to conquer the rest of the lions in his way as he had those already met. At commencement day he received the parchment which proclaimed him an alumnus of Columbia, and he also had special mention for the thorough manner in which he had passed his examinations in a year less than the ordinary time.

"I am going West now for a few months," he said to Miss Steiner, "and I want to take Rosalie with me."

She was used to odd ideas of his with reference to the child, but this one staggered her for the moment.

"I do not see how I can go, just now," she began.

"It will not be necessary," he responded, abruptly.

"I can get along with Gretchen. I wish to see the frontier again, where I lived with my father for so long. It will do Rosalie good to breathe the air of the prairies and to see a little of the wild life there."

She breathed a sigh.

"Oh, well, I will go," she answered. "I could not think of permitting her to take that journey in the charge of a nurse alone."

"You seem to forget," he said, loftily, "that *I* am going."

"But you are a man, and Rosalie is a girl."

"I *am* a man—at last!" he answered, drawing a deep breath. "Rosalie is a child—feminine, it is true, but still a child—nothing else. There is not a thing that you can do for her that a nursemaid could not, but if you wish to undertake the hardships, I certainly have no objection."

Within a year he would be twenty-one, and possessed under the law of equal power with her. She did not like to go to the frontier—did not like the idea of Rosalie's going—but she thought it was best to accede. It used to come over the woman with awful force sometimes that after he had attained his majority she would sink into a mere cypher in the account, and that he would then have his way without even taking the pains to consult her. Rosalie would grow older, and by-and-by it would become unbearable.

There was only one bright ray of hope in this dark sky, and that was Lysle. He was within two years as old as his cousin, and in case things grew desperate she could call upon him to help her. She used to figure out the ages, showing how Rosalie would be eight when Lysle was twenty-one and Stanley twenty-three. And she trembled at the long years that

would still elapse between that time and the day when Rosalie would reach her own majority, and come into undisputed possession of her property and herself.

Lysle wrote to her occasionally—not often—from Paris, where he still remained. He did not answer the questions that were uppermost in her mind, or give any hint by which she could guess them. But he told of his studies, and of the progress he was making, and said he was more certain than ever that he had chosen the profession calculated to give him the greatest happiness. She wrote in reply that Rosalie was growing big and strong, and never hinted that there was any trouble brewing between her and Stanley. It would be time enough to tell him those things when he was old enough to be of some use to her.

The three western bound travelers crossed the continent by easy stages, stopping a few days on the way at Saratoga, Niagara, Chicago and Omaha. At last they found themselves quartered in a little hotel on the edge of the Indian territory, where the accommodations were simply vile and the surroundings almost unbearable to a lady just from the comforts of life in the metropolis.

"How Rosalie and I shall enjoy this!" said Stanley, with enthusiasm, as he gazed up the ravine, on the morning after their arrival. "It all brings back to me the happiest period of my life, when I was under my father's care, and had no more to trouble me than the pigeons or the yellow-birds. Rosalie and I shall like it," he repeated, "but it will not be nice for you, Miss Steiner, as I told you before we left New York. I hope you will feel at full liberty to return whenever you weary of it."

His words were not unkind, nor was his manner of uttering them, but they made her feel more wretched than she had felt for years.

"Come, Rosalie," he called to the little girl, who flew to meet him. "I am now going to show you the Indians and horses, and everything that is wild and free."

And together they left the woman, the hand of the child in his.

CHAPTER V.

A STUDY FROM THE NUDE.

What was Lysle doing, all this time, in Paris?

He was drawing and painting, and learning the French language, and making many friends, as he was sure to do wherever he was located. He was growing a little taller and heavier, though it was evident that he would never possess the wonderful physique of his cousin Stanley. He was now eighteen years old, slender, slightly pale, with the face of a poet and that half-abstracted air that only the true artist owns.

He could speak French so well that many of his acquaintances supposed him a native of one of the departments. He had studied other things, too, beside the use of the brush, the mixing of colors, and the shading of lines. He had tied himself down for a certain number of hours each day, under the care of a private tutor, and he had done well. His painting master, M. Jouanneau, was enthusiastic about him, and predicted a career.

With all these things to occupy his time, Lysle still found opportunity to walk on the boulevards, and to take little dinners with parties of students and others, the latter mostly in the Latin Quarter, in the neighborhood of which he resided. These affairs were usually attended by a number of grisettes attached by more or less strong bonds to their masculine escorts, and some of the proceedings were of a nature that had best not be recorded. Lysle's handsome face appealed to many of the susceptible young women whom he met at these places, but it soon came to be recognized that they could expect no more of him than a pleasant word or a bit of conversation. He never lectured them, never criticised their mode of life, but there were bounds to the freedom which he permitted, and they learned to know and respect them. He walked amidst the gay life of Paris like the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, without the smell of the flames so much as touching his garments.

There were many young men in the set to which he belonged who held masculine virtue as a thing for gibes, but they made an exception of Lysle in everything. There were girls there who would have considered any other lad of his years a dunce for a constant refusal of their caresses, but they did not mind it in Lysle; indeed they liked him the better for it. If he had lectured them, or acted as if he despised them for their mode of life—that would have been a very different affair. But he used to sit at the table with the rest, or in a box with a party at the theatre, or in a Sunday carriage in the Bois, joining in the merriment as long as it was of an innocent nature, and refraining from com-

ment when it passed the bounds of his ideas of decorum.

Had he been ill any of them would have tended him as though she were his sister. Had he fallen on times of financial hardship, not one would have refused to share her narrow means with him till he was out of need. When he came into a room where a parcel of them were gathered it was a contest which should get him nearest to her.

"Here is your seat, Lysle!" a dozen of them would call, in chorus.

Knowing him and his habits so well, none of the men felt the least jealousy of him, and he grew a stronger favorite as the years went by.

Sometimes a new comer to the always changing circle tried to rally him on his "goodness." They were delighted when a letter fell from his pocket addressed to "Miss Janet Steiner, St. Nicholas Hotel, New York," and a shout arose that Lysle had a sweetheart in America, about whom he was so reticent, and that this accounted for his obliviousness to the charms of the fair habitués of the Quartier Latin. Upon this, Lysle told them in simple language the story of his cousin Vandenhoff's will, and of his being one of the guardians of the infant Rosalie. And, though some of them found it vastly amusing, most of the girls thought it very lovely, and asked many questions as to what the child was like, and what he intended to do with her when she grew older. When he said he hoped his ward would after a while be brought to Paris for her education, several of the girls cried out in earnest protest.

"No, no!" they exclaimed. "Keep the little one out of this wicked city! We know how it is

here. Let her stay in America, where the women are virtuous. They *are* all virtuous there, are they not, Lysle?"

And Lysle blushed, and said he hoped so, but in such a gentle way that no offence was possible.

Arthur Peck, formerly of the Brooks Academy, came to Paris in that year, when Lysle was eighteen, and ran across him one evening at a little restaurant in the Boulevard San Michel. They had parted warm friends, it will be remembered, but Arthur was so glad to see an acquaintance that he forgot the disagreement and came over to where Lysle sat and greeted him with great cordiality. Lysle, on his part, pleased that Arthur seemed to have resumed his old warmth towards him, rose to take his hand, made a place for him at the board and introduced him to the circle by whom he was surrounded. Arthur could not speak a hundred words of French, but what he had seen of Paris delighted him beyond measure. It was that part of Paris, by-the-way, that Young America seems destined to know long before he can find her art galleries or monuments, and Arthur thought the party that Lysle had presented him to one of the brightest he had yet encountered.

"*J' aime les americains*," said one of the girls to him, in that soft dialect of the grisette that does not need translation. Her last lover had gone home at the end of his college term, and she was seeking for a new one. In an hour she led the boy away a willing captive, and the next day he came to the address that Lysle had given him, wildly enthusiastic in her praise.

"I never can thank you enough," he exclaimed, "for

that introduction. She is a perfect darling. I have made arrangements—"

"I beg you," responded Lysle, flushing at the thought that he had unconsciously acted as a go-between, "not to give me any further particulars. I had no idea when I presented you to my friends that anything else would follow, and I must insist in knowing nothing at all about it."

"You don't mean to say," began Arthur, "that after being three years in this paradise, you have escaped—"

"I don't mean to say anything about it," was the quiet reply. "Tell me when you left home, and what your plans are."

The young man thought this leaving a very interesting subject to take up a very dull one, but he remembered the Lysle of former days, and knew there was no use in getting into an argument with him.

"Well," he replied, "I stayed at Brooks a year after you did, and then went to Yale. Somehow Yale didn't agree with me and my father took me out. We agreed that all the Greek and Latin that could be got into me wasn't worth the trouble, and after drifting around Baltimore for awhile, I made a suggestion that quite met his views. You know the old man is interested in electricity. He is engaged in telegraph schemes and has several inventions that have brought him a pretty pile of cash. But he isn't contented to sit down and enjoy what he has earned. He must keep on with his experiments, and they will eat up the whole of his fortune yet, I am afraid. He has got two of the craziest ideas now that you ever could dream of. One of them is, that people are going to be able to talk into a tube,

which will reproduce the sounds when carried to a distance; and the other is that street cars and small machinery can be propelled by an electric current faster and cheaper than by horses or steam. When an inventor gets an idea into his head nothing will shake it out, and all I had to do was to see if there was any chance for me before the last dollar went. I read in one of his magazines that electrical science was making great strides in France, and I suggested to the governor that it would be a great scheme to send me over here to study with these Frenchmen, and see if I could not get on to their plans. He bit at it like a shark—and here I am."

Lysle was not over pleased with this story, as it indicated an unfilial disposition that he was far from admiring. He said he hoped Arthur had succeeded in finding the place he sought.

"Oh, yes," laughed the other. "I found it last night, in the Rue Champolion." Then seeing a frown gathering on Lysle's face, he added, "I don't intend to hurt myself with hard work or study, you can make your mind up to that. I am just going to work the old gent for all I can, and have the best time of my life. It is only a week since I came here, and I never saw a place that pleased me so well. That Madeleine whom I met with you is entrancing. I am going to live at her hotel, and by her aid I shall learn the language fast enough, if nothing else. I never saw—"

Lysle was trying hard not to get impatient, but Arthur's persistency annoyed him exceedingly.

"Once for all, I won't hear anything more about it!" he said, firmly.

Arthur reddened and kept his temper with difficulty.

"Ah, well, never mind," he responded. "You have done me too good a turn for me to quarrel with you. I must be going." And he was off.

Lysle was sorry. It seemed as if he was destined to make an enemy of Arthur. He went back to his studies with an abstracted air that did not escape the attention of his kind old master.

"I am very happy to-day," said M. Jouanneau to him. "I have secured for my life class one of the finest young models ever seen in Paris."

"Ah, that is good!" exclaimed the young artist, all his gloom disappearing. "Who is she?"

"Her name is Mlle. Clothilde Jouet. She recently came to Paris from the neighborhood of Albi."

"Her age?" asked Lysle.

"About fifteen, I should say. But her form, *mon dieu!* Old painter as I am, it is enough to set me raving. No Venus was ever more perfect. You shall tell me this afternoon if I am wrong."

Lysle looked at M. Jouanneau in a dreamy way. He was seeing the girl in the vision of his mind.

"How did you secure her?" he asked, presently.

"Her mother came to me. She told the usual story. They are very poor and came to Paris in the hope that they could better themselves. Their little stock of money is gone, and nothing appeared to confront them but the workhouse. The mother happened to read in a bit of paper that came wrapped around some kindling that good prices were paid for models, and some one directed her to me."

The young man waited a moment.

"She has never posed before, then?"

"Never."

"That is bad. She will probably make a fuss about undressing."

"Possibly she will, a little, for a day or two. But her mother will come and go with her, and you know the odd feeling wears off very soon."

"Shall you pose her nude to begin with?"

"Undoubtedly. It is by far the best way."

Lysle took his pencils and went to work, dismissing the new model from his mind. It was not a rare occurrence to see new models in the studio of M. Jouanneau. There was a large class, and the subjects treated embraced a wide range. When noon came he went out to get his breakfast in a neighboring restaurant, and when he returned he found a woman of about forty years of age, accompanied by a young girl, waiting in the studio. M. Jouanneau had also gone to breakfast, and the concierge had showed the couple in, according to directions left with him.

"Mlle. Clothilde and her mother, I presume," said Lysle, pleasantly.

"Yes, monsieur," responded the woman. "Madame Jouet, at your service."

"Make yourself at home," said Lysle, in an off-hand manner. "The master and his students will soon be here." Then, noticing that there was a look of alarm in the eyes of the girl, he added, kindly, "You will be a little confused at first, mademoiselle, but it will wear away rapidly. In a week you will think nothing of it. M. Jouanneau is very considerate. He will not allow you to tire yourself."

Clothilde whispered to her mother, as Lysle crossed to another part of the room, and the woman spoke again.

"I hope the gentlemen will not expect my daughter to expose herself very much on the first day. She

is a good girl, monsieur, and she has never been in such a situation before."

Lysle turned and looked at the girl, who blushed scarlet. He hoped she was not going to be silly.

"I assure you," he said, "that entire nudity is best. There will be seances later where we shall want but a part of her form. But at the beginning the whole is required. M. Jouanneau told me this an hour ago, and I trust you will make no objections before him. He would not like it, and possibly he would get impatient."

The girl clung around the neck of her mother and whispered to her again. They had a conference that lasted for some minutes.

"You will have to submit," said the mother, in a low voice, which was not low enough, however, to have the words escape Lysle. And the girl answered, with a sob, "Oh, I cannot!"

The young man, with well meaning good nature, went over to them and tried to give her courage.

"It is nothing—absolutely nothing at all," he said. "You will be on that little platform there, and not one of us will come within ten feet of you. Your mother will sit within call. Every model has these feelings to some extent at first, but in a few days they laugh at them. You could not earn five francs an hour more easily. Why, you have nothing to do but assume a position. We poor fellows have all the real work, and we get nothing for it, either," he concluded, with an idea that a little humor would brighten her up.

All this did not satisfy the girl, and when M. Jouanneau arrived, the mother made an appeal to him to allow the first pose to be in partial drapery.

Clothilde, though she did not speak, made the same request with her frightened eyes.

"Tut, tut!" cried the old man. "I talked all this over with you yesterday, when you brought your daughter here. You will get ten francs for two hours, and probably thirty or forty francs a week for a long time. It is not wise to be squeamish, mademoiselle," he added, turning to the girl. "Let me tell you that we do not pay money here for nothing. You must have a little bravery for once or twice and it will be over. I have seen them so often!"

"But she is a virtuous girl, monsieur!" said the mother, in a last effort to move him.

"So were all the rest, I suppose," he answered, roughly. "One must have been good some time, I should think. Well! Is she going to pose or not? The students are already arriving."

Another whispered consultation, a repressal on the part of the girl of a tendency to burst into tears, and then the mother and daughter disappeared behind the curtain that served for a dressing-room. The class took their places, discussing among themselves the latest news of the studios and galleries. The clock on a bracket in a corner ticked off the seconds, and M. Jouanneau became impatient.

"M. Melrose," he called, at last, "will you see how soon she will be ready?"

Lysle went to the curtain and propounded the question. The mother answered that the girl had disrobed and was only waiting for the requisite courage to present herself.

"Pshaw!" he replied. "She will never appear if she waits for that. She exhibited herself before M. Jouanneau yesterday, did she not? It is quite the same thing."

Then, for the first time, the voice of the girl was heard.

"But he is such an old man; and all the rest of you are young!"

Lysle laughed in spite of himself.

"If you are ready, I will tell him to come and pose you," he said.

M. Jouanneau, upon being informed that Mlle. Clothilde awaited him, pushed his way without ceremony behind the curtain, and in a few minutes had placed the girl in the position which he wanted—that of a maiden asleep on the seashore—with the necessary scenery about her to represent the sands and the waves.

"Don't be a dunce, now," was his adjuration, "when I draw the curtain. Your eyes will be shut, and you will not know whether any one is looking at you or not."

A murmur of admiration arose when the curtain was drawn, for a class of artists could not help being moved by the exquisite beauty of the girl. M. Jouanneau had posed her in the natural attitude of easy slumber, with one of her legs drawn under the other and her cheek resting on her rounded arm. Her hair, which was of unusual length, was floating across her like a mantle, concealing nothing, and yet appearing to be, in a sense, a shield for her young charms from the attack meditated by the boisterous waves that were just beyond reach. The charcoal pencils were soon busy, and the room was almost as still as a tomb except for the scratching sounds that they made.

M. Jouanneau had to go to his model two or three times and whisper to her:

"Try to assume a little more ease," he said. "You

draw yourself into an unnatural position by that excessive shrinking. Is there anything I can do for you to make you more comfortable?"

"Ah, monsieur," she answered, faintly, "if you would only give me a blanket!"

He smiled and returned to his class. After the first half hour she became evidently easier, and the master silently called the attention of his pupils to the fact, directing them to remedy the stilted lines which she had compelled them to draw.

"Let me compliment you, mademoiselle," said the old man, in a low tone, going to her side. "You have taken a magnificent position. Do not change it for the next hour, and I will give you two francs extra."

Mlle. Clothilde did not reply, and he gave her a closer inspection. The warm air of the place and the relief from the extreme strain, a restless night and the fright of her first moments, had done its work. Her rosy mouth was partly open, displaying a ravishing row of pearls. Her position was indeed magnificent, but the reason was quite apparent.

The girl was sound asleep!

Those of my readers who have seen the painting of the "Sleeping Girl," now know the secret of its delightful naturalness.

When the lesson of the day was ended the model still slept. As M. Jouanneau had an engagement that compelled him to leave, he told Lysle to give Madame Jouet twelve francs and ask her to bring her daughter on the following Thursday. All the other students had left the studio, glad to get again into the fresh air, when Lysle went to perform this errand. M. Jouanneau had closed the curtain before the model at the end of the seance, and in his

haste had forgotten to apprise Madame Jouet that the affair was ended. Lysle found the girl still asleep, and as he gazed on her warm beauty he felt a thrill that was not wholly that of the artist. He knelt by her side for some seconds before he awoke her. Then he touched her very gently on the face with his hands.

"The séance is ended, mademoiselle," he said. "You are at liberty to go."

Clothilde opened her eyes and stared at him for a moment in wonder. Then her memory returned and she was plunged into the most intense confusion. She tried in vain to conceal herself, and was unable to utter a single word.

"You have been sleeping," he said, gently. "I will speak to your mother."

Madame Jouet received his message with satisfaction and went to her child's assistance. When they were both ready for the street he gave the mother the twelve francs and with it a compliment for the girl's pose.

"It has pleased M. Jouanneau much," he said. "He will give your daughter a good deal to do, and after he is through with her he can doubtless secure her other engagements. Do you wish to see the drawing I have made? It was a splendid thing that she fell asleep."

"Come Clothilde," responded the mother, "let us look at it. The young gentleman is very kind."

The girl hung back however. Her cheeks were fiery red. She wanted nothing so much as to get away from the place. The mother spoke to her sharply.

"You are not polite, Clothilde! They have given

as twelve francs, when the bargain was for ten only. You must look at the picture."

Lysle saw the frightened look reappear in the girl's face.

"It is not necessary," he hastened to say. "Another time will do, when the colors are in it. You must not mind this so much, mademoiselle," he added, kindly. "You will think nothing of it after a few times."

She thanked him with one look of her eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

A GREAT STORY BOOK.

Stanley Melrose was so pleased to be again on the frontier that he prolonged his stay into the autumn, in spite of the frequent suggestions of Miss Steiner that it was time they moved eastward. Rosalie was as happy to be there as he. The wild life that he led her into charmed the child. Young as she was, she learned to ride the Indian ponies, galloping up and down the prairie fearlessly on their bare backs, clinging to the reins and the animals' manes without the least alarm. She baited her hooks and caught the little fish in the streams. She had foot races with the children of the aborigines, and sometimes out-ran them. Her face took on the color of the wind and the sun. She carried herself even more erectly than before. She was indeed becoming a superb "little animal," as Stanley had designed that she should.

All this pleased the young guardian, but the training was carried to an extent not wholly agreeable to the elder one. She did not object to having Rosalie developed in her muscles and lungs, but she began to fear that the child would form a love for a wild life that nothing could eradicate.

"You will make an Indian squaw of her at the rate you are going on," she remarked to him one day.

"I would rather make an Indian *chief* of her," was his reply.

"But I cannot allow it," said Miss Steiner, rallying her mental forces for the conflict that she knew was inevitable.

"Ah, you cannot?" he answered, elevating his eyebrows.

"No," she insisted. "Rosalie is a girl, and there are limits to the training of a girl that you do not seem to recognize. When she grows up she will be an heiress and a lady. You are in danger of making a tomboy of her and I fear she will never be able to eradicate that tendency from her nature if the life she is leading goes on much longer."

He could never wholly conceal the contempt that he felt for women who professed to have opinions.

"'An heiress and a lady,'" he repeated, quoting her words. "I hope she will not also be a fool, and she shall not be, if I can help it."

Miss Steiner wondered whether there was a covert allusion to herself in this statement, but she was too earnest in the matter she had in hand to mind trifles.

"You will admit, I think," she said, "that it would not be becoming in a young lady to do all the things Rosalie has been taught?"

"What things?" he asked, laconically.

"Riding horses bareback, for instance."

"No," he assented. "It would be better for a young lady to use a saddle. But let me tel. you that a superb seat is gained by beginning in the way Rosalie has, and that when her time comes to ride in Central Park, or the Bois de Boulogne, she will have no rivals. How many American women know how to ride? How many of them even know how to walk? Rosalie is keeping all of her joints supple. You can see for yonrself the state of health she is in. Compare her with the first puny product that you meet of the Fifth Avenue hot-house style of raising children, and you will be compelled to admit her superiority in every respect."

She felt a certain truth in what he said, but it did not alter her opinion that he was going to an unnecessary length.

"Where are you going to stop—that is what I wish to know," she said,

"I am not going to stop at all. I am only going to alter my course, as she matures, so gradually that she will not know when the change begins. I rely a great deal upon the child's common sense, which is being developed with the rest. I am now giving her a physique that will stand by her through life. There is really nothing else that you can give a child of her age with advantage, except the qualities of endurance and courage that naturally come with it. Do not imagine, merely because she has inherited money, that she is different from children who have no expectations. She has as good a right to take the fresh air deep into her lungs as any little savage on the reservation yonder. The dollars that are waiting will be no equivalent for the bodily strength you would deny her. She can already lift more than

her weight with ease. As her muscles harden she shall learn to increase her capacity in that direction till she can carry four times as much. She can swim like a duck, an accomplishment that may save her own life or those of others, one of these days. It is now 'unladylike,' I know, to be able to do anything of use in the world, either for herself or her friends, but there is soon coming a reaction. The girl of the future will not be ashamed of appearing like a sensible creature."

He could always talk so glibly, and there seemed nothing ever gained by arguing with him.

"She will have many other things to learn," ventured Miss Steiner. "When I was her age I could read ordinary story books. She does not even know one letter of the alphabet from another."

"I am glad of that," replied Stanley, rather ungraciously. "I was afraid either you or Gretchen might have taught her. The Great Story Book that she is reading here in the West is better illustrated than any to be bought at the shops. She has learned one thing of value in your parlors, the facility with which she speaks German. I should like her to acquire French in the same way, with no grammar or exercise book to tire her little brain. A well educated French maid is one of the things I mean to get as soon as we reach New York."

"Then we are soon to return?" she asked, in a pleased tone.

"Oh, yes, I suppose we must. If I had only Rosalie to consider, though, I should say stay till spring. It would be good for her to experience a Western winter. I have talked to her about it and she is wild to remain, but we shall have to postpone it till some other year."

"What would become of your law studies in that case?" she asked.

"In case I stay here? I should go on reading the books I brought, four or five hours each day, as I have already done, and take the lectures next year. I have no fear of being refused admission to the bar when it is time for me to apply."

Miss Rosalie rode up to the window where this conversation was being held, and at a signal from Stanley, reined in her pony so suddenly as almost to throw him on his haunches. Slipping to the ground with a celerity that sent a thrill of alarm through Miss Steiner, she ran laughing into the house, her face aglow with the excitement of the exercise.

"A band of Indians have just brought in six deer!" she cried, as soon as she opened the door. "They are going out to-morrow to find another herd. I wish you would let me go with them, Stanley!"

She always called him by his given name. When Miss Steiner had remonstrated, long ago, he had said that he preferred it, and that settled the matter.

"What would *you* do on a deer hunt?" he asked. "*You* couldn't shoot a deer."

"I could see the others."

"You cannot go."

The child had been taught never to show the least disappointment at any refusal or rebuff.

"We were talking of you," said Stanley. "Miss Steiner thinks it nearly time we return to New York. I suppose you would rather remain here."

"Yes," said Rosalie, simply.

"But we shall have to go in a few days."

"Very well."

"That is all. You can go out to play again now."

When the child had disappeared, Miss Steiner

could not help saying that the willingness of Rosalie to do whatever she was bid seemed almost unnatural.

"When I was her age," said she, "I probably should have cried my eyes out at such a disappointment."

"Very likely," he answered, with cynicism. "But let me ask you if children who are thus reared are any happier than others who are taught as she has been? What is the best preparation for a lifetime that is sure to be full of trials?"

"It is hard to think," she replied, "that a life like that of Rosalie need be full of trials. The fortune that she will inherit ought to free her from most of the troubles of the world."

Stanley Melrose liked controversy, and it pleased him to be able to answer her as completely as he felt able to do.

"Let me tell you again," he said, "that there is no greater folly than to consider that certain people are born with less need than others to develop all the strength, mental and physical, that is in them. If they are rich enough to ride in a carriage, that is no reason they should not learn to walk. If they can hire a servant to cut their food and place it in their mouths, it is not wise, nevertheless, for them to neglect to learn the use of their hands. Though they may inherit millions, there will always be some ungratified wish, unless they are taught in infancy to limit their desires to things attainable. Rosalie has been made to resign every thought not in consonance with her reasonable environment. You see what my system has done for her physical health. Help me to give it equal effect on her mental qualities."

Miss Steiner could never argue long with him, but there was always an unsatisfied feeling, when she

acquiesced in his views. She had the womanly love for infants *as* infants, and she found that there was nothing left of the baby nature in Rosalie. Sometimes at night an irrepressible desire came over her to take the child in her arms, and undress her, rocking her to sleep afterwards with one of those lullaby songs of the German tongue that she knew so well. But Rosalie showed an invincible repugnance to "coddling" of any sort. She could undress herself, and when she had placed her head upon her pillow there were not ten seconds left before she had relapsed into the satisfying oblivion that comes with a healthy body and mind. Miss Steiner was obliged, therefore, to be content with sitting by the little bedside and watching the quiet face. Even attempts to pass her hand gently over the child's curls were not successful, as the slightest motion made her stir like a cat, and her blue eyes would open and stare at the intruder on the calm peace of her slumbers. Seeing who was there, she would immediately relapse into deep sleep again; but not liking to disturb her, the hand of the watcher would be kept away.

Rosalie was the best child that ever lived in all things that depended on obedience and good nature. The indefinable characteristics of infancy were wanting, however, and Miss Steiner had many a lonely hour in consequence.

She had brought a baby from Europe, and allowed this man to take it from her by slow degrees. Had he given her something better in its place? She tried to think he had. If it were not better for her, it might be for Rosalie. It was her duty—as a guardian—to think of the child's best good instead of her own.

They packed up and bade farewell to the Indian

country—Stanley and the child with heartfelt regrets, the woman with devout thanksgiving. It did not seem as if she could have endured the discomforts of a winter there. She was more than pleased when she saw the inside of her rooms in the St. Nicholas again, and when Gretchen's broad German countenance looked in upon her. The girl had spent the summer with relations that she had discovered in Pennsylvania, and was very glad to get back to her former mistress. Stanley noticed with satisfaction that the child submitted with evident discontent, though she endeavored to conceal it, to the embraces of her nurse. He had made her what he meant to do, a strong young animal who did not need petting.

If Miss Steiner expected to have much more of Rosalie to herself, on coming to the city, she soon discovered her mistake. Stanley studied late at night and attended his law school lectures, but he found time, so active was his capacity for work, to be a great deal of the day with his little ward, and to take her out with him for many hours. It mattered little what was the state of the mercury in the thermometer to these famous pedestrians. When it was very cold Rosalie wore slightly heavier clothing, and when the snow or slush made the streets less smooth she put on stronger boots and leggins. It was one of his theories that a healthy child ought to be able to walk almost as much in a day as a grown person, and his experience with Rosalie certainly went far to prove it. Before the winter was ended there were occasions when he came home tired and found her still willing and anxious to continue the walk. The two figures came to be very well known on Broadway and in the Park, and many ladies turned to

look at the rosy-faced child and utter an inward wish that their puny darlings at home had such a complection.

"Isn't it too cold for you on a day like this?" asked a kind lady once, as they paused to look into the great windows of a store in which was a handsome display of pictures.

Rosalie looked up at her in wonder.

"There never was a day too cold for me," she responded.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the lady. "I have a little girl at home who would not go out on such a day as this for anything."

"Then she must be ill," said Rosalie, thoughtfully.

"Ill! No, she is not. She is as well as any one. But it is very cold. The thermometer registers ten degrees above zero at this moment."

"I think it is lovely," was the child's response. And as she resumed her way with her guardian, the strangeness of the new idea struck her forcibly.

"Too cold, Stanley!" she said. "How could it ever be too cold?"

He smiled down upon her approvingly. Her replies to the lady had pleased him.

"Some people pay a great deal of attention to the weather," he said. "It is always either too cold or too hot for them."

"It is never for me," she answered. "Sometimes the air in our rooms at the hotel is too close—it seems as if the life was taken out of it, and I find it hard to breathe—but I never mind the weather out of doors. I would have liked to stay with the Indians all winter, and have slept in one of their tepees. There would always be plenty of air there, and the smoke from the fire in the centre would look so

lovely on a frosty day, curling up through the opening at the top!"

He made a mental note that he would speak to Miss Steiner about the atmosphere that Rosalie was compelled to breathe, vitiated as it was by the requirements of a false notion of comfort. Perhaps the child slept in a room which had its windows fastened. He wondered that he had been so long neglectful of such an important thing. What a pity it was that Mr. Vandenhoff had put a woman in his list at all! Stanley was quite certain that he could have done much better by the child if he had had her solely in his own control. Then he remembered that he was still under age, a reflection that always annoyed him.

"Next year," he said to himself, "that trouble will be over."

One day, when there was a terrible storm, and the streets were really impassable, he had a long talk with the child in his own rooms at the top of the house, where she considered it a great treat to be allowed to go. She asked him a great many questions about the books that were piled on his shelves, and learned for the first time that the earth was round and that it turned on its axis every day. He had a large globe there, with the countries marked off on them.

"Can you show me the place where my cousin Lysle lives?"

He had never heard her mention Lysle's name before.

"What do you know about Lysle?" he inquired, with curiosity.

"Oh, Miss Steiner talks of him often," responded

the little one. "She told me he was in France. Will you show me France on these maps?"

A strange jealousy of his cousin came over him, but he pointed out the place to her, and also the city of Paris.

"He is coming here some time, is he not?" was her next statement.

"Who says that?"

"Miss Steiner. She says he is coming whenever she wants him—perhaps next year. Stanley, do you know what I would like very much to do?"

He shook his head. He was thinking very hard.

"To learn to read. I am sure there is a great deal in books. I have to ask so many questions now, and if I could read I could find out for myself."

He did not answer immediately. His thoughts were on Paris. He knew that Lysle and Miss Steiner were correspondents. They were arranging, perhaps, to dethrone him. He had never been fond of his cousin, but at this moment he liked him less than ever.

"It will be a good while before you learn to read," he said, at last, recalling what she had said. "You will have to learn to speak French first, and to do other things. I am going to get you a teacher very soon who will teach you French, and you must apply yourself very diligently to the study of it."

"Yes, Stanley," she responded, cheerfully. "And, after that, I shall learn to read books?"

"After that," he repeated absently, "you will learn to read."

He was still thinking of his cousin and Miss Steiner. They might plan and plan, but he would outwit them!

CHAPTER VII.

"I DO NOT WANT TO SAY."

The next year had no event of greater importance to Stanley Melrose than the fact that it made him twenty-one years of age, and relieved him of that period of under-guardianship that he so much detested. It is true he had suffered little from the restrictions of Mr. Dennin, and had been permitted to do about as he pleased in all respects by that indulgent gentleman. It is equally true that, owing to the yielding nature of Miss Steiner, he had had control of Rosalie to the fullest extent. But Stanley was a young man who chafed under the slightest restraint, even though it were only imaginary. The happiest day he had ever seen was that spring morning when he awoke and said to himself—

"Stanley Melrose, you are no longer an infant. You are a Man, and no one hereafter can say to you that they have the right to control your actions or your property."

Stanley knew, long before that day, exactly what estate his father had left him, and in what it was invested. It gave him a new delight, however, when the documents were placed in his hands, and he became their permanent custodian. He was not rich as riches are reckoned in these days, but he had a goodly sum of his own, and he loved money. He had planned time after time how he would increase the sum, and how little it would be necessary to spend before his coming practice should bring him

in a handsome income. It was one of his ambitions to become one of the rich men of New York. He wanted also to be one of its most noted lawyers, and it was his pleasure to think that the two objects could be attained together. He knew that the income of an eminent member of the bar was a very large one, and he determined to lay aside all other thoughts until success was achieved. It was not hard for him to make this resolve. Quite the opposite in disposition from his cousin Lysle, he had no sentimental notions to strangle. He cared nothing whatever for luxury, and women never troubled him. All he wanted was Money, and Fame in his profession.

One of the first things he did was to get the whole of Rosalie's fortune "into better shape," as he expressed it. It had largely been reinvested under his advice, several years before, but Miss Steiner had kept a restraining hand on the young man, and the changes were all such as the most prudent could have approved. Now that he had as good a right as she to decide, and the greater natural opportunity to judge, being interested in the market as an investor of his own funds, the lady offered little opposition to his plans. He could show her that the alterations in the investments that had been made before by his suggestion had resulted in a large increase of income, and she had no reason to doubt that his judgment was gaining with his years. It was not on a question of this kind that Miss Steiner had fears of Stanley.

The proverb that "Nothing succeeds like success," is one of the truest. Men who learned that Melrose had enginered a deal in Harlem lands that had doubled the money of all who went into it with him, went home and made wills naming him as executor

and trustee of their estates. Managers of institutions which had funds drawing small rates of interest came to him and asked that he take charge of them. He was elected a director of two banks within six months and placed on several commissions usually given to much older men. Business people who watched his methods said he was not a speculator or a plunger. He never went into anything unless it was a sure thing.

"Will you take some of this stock?" one merchant would say to another. "No, I am afraid of touching anything outside of my legitimate business," would be the answer. "But young Melrose is at the head of the company." "Ah, that alters the case. How much can I get of it?"

The business world was glad to notice that Melrose had none of the fast habits that seem to come naturally with success to many men. He smoked one cigar a day, after dinner. He drank only a little wine, a glass of claret with his meals, or of champagne, if invited, at a directors' meeting. His head was always cool and his hand steady, just the sort of a fellow that you would like to trust your interests to. He lived at a good hotel—he thought it wise to do that—and wore good clothes, never extravagant ones. His garments were usually black, which gave him an air of earnestness, and his heavy watch chain helped to strengthen the impression that he was in no sense a trifler.

When he rose to speak at a business gathering, all conversation ceased. His words were few and to the point. When he took the chair, as he soon was frequently elected to do, there was no delay in the transaction of the matter that had called the party together. The meeting was to be, let us say, at fou-

o'clock. Upon the stroke of the hour he rapped for order. Everything was settled, perhaps, at half-past four. If so, at 4:31 Mr. Melrose had left the room. His associates whispered to each other that he was a very busy man, had large estates to manage, and no time to waste. All of which was ultimately of great advantage to him and brought him much business, out of which he reaped handsome profits.

Stanley studied hard at his law books, and never missed passing the highest examination point. He drank in the subtleties of legal provision and stored his mind with statute, decision and exceptional case. He had only one recreation, as he said to himself one day, and that was the care of Rosalie.

The little girl was now nearly six years old, as strong and healthy as ever, and subjected to the same training in physical things as she had been from the first. No other child in New York, outside of a museum, at least, could run as fast, jump as far, lift as many pounds as she. Her young muscles were almost like iron. She was a perfect stranger to fatigue. She did not know the feeling of an ache or pain. Her skin was bronzed by exposure in all seasons to the weather. Her eyes were bright, her body slender, her form straight as an arrow. Having been taught never to indulge in repinings, she did not lament for the things she could not have, and no one had seen a tear escape her eyes since her babyhood.

Stoical as the Indians from whom her guardian had modelled her, she yet had a kindness of heart that made her willing to sacrifice any wish or any pleasure for those she loved. Without the coyness that we have learned to consider inseparable from

childhood, there was a straightforward honesty that won friends. Rosalie did not know how to wheedle. She had as yet no idea of the construction of a falsehood. Her principal offences were thoughtless bits of mischief, of the turpitude of which she was not fully aware. Stanley had his own way of dealing with such lapses. It was part of his theory that no one should ever speak angrily to a child, or even in its presence, and as for blows, they were not to be thought of.

An instance of his manner of dealing with her may be worth recording. The child came up to his room one day when he was absent, supposing that he was there. The open grate was filled with a collection of rubbish, principally papers that he intended to destroy. Rosalie thought it would be good fun to set these on fire and watch the flames rising up the chimney. She lit a match and applied it to the heap. When Stanley entered the room, he saw her standing so near the burning mass that it was a wonder her dress did not ignite. Perhaps in a moment more it would have done so. She was so enrapt in the sight before her that she did not hear his step, a remarkable thing in a child whose senses were always on the alert. He saw the delight that she was experiencing, her bright face testifying of the mental sensation that was possessing her.

"Rosalie," he said, in his ordinary tone, when he had taken a chair, "come here a minute."

She turned and saw him, and at that moment it came into her head for the first time that there might be something wrong—she did not know what—in the liberty she had taken. She walked over to where he stood, and the rosy hue in her face was not wholly that of the fire she had left.

"What do you think I am going to say?" he asked.

There was nothing in his voice or his manner to indicate whether he was or was not pleased. It was his way to leave that as far as possible to her own perception.

"I think there is something not right about the fire I have kindled," she answered, looking him fearlessly, but a little regretfully, in the face. She was not like a child who anticipates a blow, either mental or physical.

"You are right," said he, gravely. "Now, what is it?"

She turned and looked at the ashes in the grate and the bits of paper that were still undergoing the process of consumption.

"I hope," she said, "that there was nothing of value there. I think you would not put any papers in that place that you wanted to preserve."

The language may appear stilted, to the reader, coming from a child of six, but Rosalie had never played with other Caucasian children, and her speech was that of her elders.

"You are right so far," he said. "The papers were of no use and I intended to destroy them with fire, as you have done."

She seemed much relieved, for she would not have liked to injure anything that was his.

"It could not hurt the grate—nor the chimney," she repeated, slowly, "for the grate was built to hold fire and the chimney to hold smoke. Perhaps—perhaps it made the room too warm on such a day as this?"

He shook his head.

"Can you think of nothing else?" he inquired.

"No, Stanley."

"Let me show you," he said, rising.

He found another lot of papers similar to the first, and when the grate had cooled sufficiently he stuffed it full of them. Then he took a match in his hand.

"Let me take your pinafore."

She took it off and gave it to him without a word.

"Now," he said, "stand and watch."

He applied the match to the paper, and when the flames had reached their fullest height, he permitted them to touch the pinafore, which was immediately in a blaze. It burned so rapidly that he was compelled in a moment to throw it upon the pile and let it be destroyed with the rest.

"Now do you see?" he asked.

"Yes," said Rosalie, soberly. "I might have set fire to my pinafore, and then to my dress, and then—"

She shuddered a little, stoic as she was.

"And then," he repeated, "to your body. You were very near to the fire when I came in."

He sat down after that and talked to her for a long time about fire, its dangers and its uses; the best servant of man, and his most terrible master, when once it is allowed to get the upper hand. He told her of the varying combustibility of the products of nature, which enables us to place this element in some of them with perfect safety, while if it comes in contact with others the greatest harm may ensue. She listened to every word, grateful for the pains he took to teach these things to her.

"I think I am much to blame for lighting the fire," she said, when he paused.

"You would be if you did it again," he said. "There has been no way in which you would be likely

to learn what I have just told you until now. The rooms in this hotel below this floor are heated by steam pipes and the fires are in the basement. But there is another thing that this may teach you, and that is not to try experiments. It would be better to inquire about things than to go ahead and find out for yourself. Now, we will say no more on this subject. Tell me how you are getting on with your French governess."

Stanley was delighted, when Rosalie had gone, as he reflected on the nature of his experiment. Nine people out of ten, he was sure, would have thought it necessary to assail the child's ears with loud and violent language, even if they did not strike her. It was a case where desperate remedies would be likely to be considered a kindness. He had accomplished the same results with a few gentle words and an appeal to her intelligence. She would never light a fire again, he was sure, knowing the danger of standing too near it.

When she came down and Miss Steiner asked her what had become of her pinafore, Rosalie related how and why Stanley had burned it.

"And he did not scold you at all?" said the woman.

"Stanley *never* scolds me!" was the quick reply.

There came an anxious thought, one that made the woman propound a question that she dreaded to have answered.

"Oh, Rosalie, do you love him better than you do me?"

The child stopped to consider, for she was eminently truthful.

"I do not want to say," she replied. "It seems to me that he is the wiser. Would it have done any

good for him to have scolded me? Could I have understood better? He knew that I would not have lit the fire if I had thought there was wrong in it. Stanley is a very wise man, Miss Steiner—a very wise man, indeed."

Yes he has taken her baby from her and given her back this prematurely aged girl. It might be the best thing for the child, but she missed the clinging arms and the infantile confidences that she had dreamed of. Was it possible that he was right and that all the rest of the civilized world had been wrong from the beginning?

"What makes you think that Stanley is wiser than I?" asked Miss Steiner, keeping up the conversation in spite of her judgment to the contrary.

"Because he knows so much," was the answer. "He told me the other day that the world is round, and that it goes flying through the air like a great bird."

"Anybody could have told you that."

"Yes, but no one except Stanley could hav made me *believe* it!"

The strangeness of this reply was enough to ensure silence for the next few minutes.

"Your cousin Lysle is also very wise," said Miss Steiner, when she was ready to resume. "And he is very handsome."

Rosalie had noticed that Stanley did not seem to think much of Lysle when she mentioned his name that morning, and this was enough to give her the cue. But she did not think that he would like to have her communicate her suspicions to Miss Steiner.

"What can he do that is wonderful?" she inquired, incredulously.

"He can paint beautiful pictures."

"That is nothing," was the disdainful answer. "I have seen ordinary looking women doing that in the galleries. Could he break a wild young stallion, as Stanley did, when we were in the West? Could he swim across Lake Koonoola? I would not like a man who spends his time painting pictures."

The woman was getting deeper and deeper into the things she meant to avoid.

"Stanley spends most of his time now studying law books. Is that better than painting the lovely things of nature?"

"When one studies," responded the child, "one learns things. It is necessary for a lawyer to know all the laws, if he intends to talk to the big judges. But it is not necessary to paint pictures."

There was no reply to this. Miss Steiner felt the bitterness of her position. She had become a cypher long before Rosalie was old enough to array herself with Stanley against her. Even her hopes in Lysle received a severe shock as she realized that the girl herself preferred Stanley and his methods to her. Technically the law gave them equal authority over the child, but his was now really the supreme, if not the sole one. To attempt any other disposition of the guardianship meant a collision, and she was not yet willing to brave that.

Early every morning the man and child went for a long walk. When he had to leave for his business and law school work he arranged it so that Rosalie should go directly to her French teacher, with whom she remained practically all the time till he came back for his early dinner.

Rosalie spoke German to Miss Steiner, English to the people about the hotel, and French to her new

governess. It was remarkable how rapidly she acquired the latter tongue. She mastered nouns, verbs and idioms with a facility that was astonishing. At dinner she spoke all three languages indiscriminately, and Stanley encouraged her to talk with the utmost freedom at that meal, when most children of her age are either excluded from the table, or made to preserve perfect quiet. After dinner she would take another short stroll with him, and return to retire early. Miss Steiner soon felt as if she had lost her altogether.

In the summer Stanley took Rosalie to the shore again, his rapidly increasing business not making it convenient to go back to the frontier, as he had intended. He tested her swimming capacity in the breakers, to the consternation of half the onlookers and the admiration of the other half, who saw that she rode as safely on the waves as any expert among them. He taught her to pull an oar, to catch all the kinds of fish that were to be had there, and to climb the mast of a small yacht and stand on the round-tree. She had practiced on ordinary tree-climbing for a long time, and thought this exercise delightful. Declaring that the rooms of the hotel where he stayed were too stuffy and hot for human beings, he slung hammocks for Rosalie and himself on one end of an upper veranda and they slept there out of doors in all weathers, having only an awning as shelter from the rain.

People newly arrived used to say—

"I hope he won't kill that child with his toughening process!"

There seemed no danger of this, however, judging by the rosy cheeks and rounded form of the little girl, who preserved intact the perfect health she had

brought to America. When autumn came, Stanley still objected to having her learn to read. It would always be easy, he said, for her to acquire that art. He wanted her to speak French and German perfectly before she touched books. Although this idea was very novel to Miss Steiner she raised no formal objection. If she had, it would have made no difference.

The next autumn passed, and the following winter, with no changes of moment. Miss Rosalie and her two oddly matched guardians stayed still at the St. Nicholas, pursuing the tenor of their respective ways much as they began. By spring the child spoke French quite as freely as she did her own tongue, and in German she conversed like a native. Stanley had been admitted to the bar, and hung out his sign with great satisfaction from one of the big down-town buildings. His reputation as a sagacious investor continued to grow apace. Business flowed in upon him until he was obliged to hire several assistants. Partnerships in some of the oldest firms in the city were thrown in his way, but he declined them all. He preferred to make his money alone and to keep it.

When still another year had passed, his voice had been heard more than once in the law courts, always in civil cases, and where large sums or great interests were involved. His luck held to him and nearly every verdict was in his favor. Still less than twenty-three years of age, he held a position that a man twice as old might have envied.

The first unpleasant news that he had heard in months was when Mr. Dennin dropped in on him one day to say that Lysle was coming home.

"He is twenty-one now, and will have charge of

his fortune," said Mr. Dennin. "If he takes my advice, he will give it to you to invest. Mr. Melrose, you are a wonder."

Stanley did not hear him.

He was thinking of his cousin with a mind akin to that with which men regard a rival in an affair of Love!

CHAPTER VIII.

INSIDE OF BOHEMIA.

Lysle Melrose had passed these years quietly in Paris, the south of France, Italy, and in excursions into other parts of Europe at vacation time. He had learned to do good work, such as not only his master, M. Jouanneau, but critics generally applauded. Several of his efforts had received honorable mention at the salons. He had a delicacy of touch that some said was the foundation of a new school.

Still the companion of the bohemian men and women of the gay capital, he was still unspoiled by them. Disposed to be serious, he might have become misanthropic, had it not been for the society of those who went to the opposite extreme. He was inclined to be introspective, and the laughter, the jests and the general buoyancy of spirits that he met with relieved his mind. As to the private characters of his associates, what were they to him? These boys and girls were not inherently wicked. They violated every rule of propriety, as laid down by the canons of social law, but they did not obtrude themselves into the society whose

rules they broke. They were a separate order of civilization, and at least much less *tiresome* than the other orders which looked down upon them with such a severe frown, and which might be, after all, if the whole truth were known, very little better themselves.

Lysle had been obliged to attend some of the receptions given by the "upper circles" of Paris to the artistic world, and he was obliged to confess that they bored him extremely. He could see, also, that a patronizing vein ran through these affairs, as if the wealthy givers of them wished their artist guests to understand fully that they were really of quite another station, permitted to come near the priests of the god Mammon because of his momentary condescension, and not from any merit of their own. To turn from a formal night in some rich fool's parlor to one passed in a restaurant of the commonest description in the Quartier Latin was a relief and a joy.

Few among his friends in Bohemia were as well off in the goods of this world as was Lysle. Most of them were in semi-straightened circumstances, depending for to-morrow's breakfast on a delayed remittance from home or the chance sale of a picture that might bring fifty francs or so. The women of the party were nearly all grisettes, though occasionally there was present some feminine artist whose struggles for a place in the temple of fame had brought her upon a common battle-ground with her brothers of the brush and pallette.

The grisettes were of the typical kind, attached followers of the fortunes of their temporary lovers, willing to share their failures or successes, and expecting to bid them farewell one day as a mother bids farewell to the child over whose coffin the earth

is thrown. But few of them seemed to think of such a thing as the morrow, as they sat about the tables each evening, and ate their soup and drank their wine. If Lysle had more silver than the rest, its only sign was in the generosity with which he allowed himself to be mulcted by his more needy acquaintances. He never showed it in the superior quality of the viands he ordered, and he was careful not to attract attention, either, by being better dressed than the others. Of all the funds that he drew, fully half went in charity, disguised usually as "loans." Probably he was sometimes imposed upon, but generally he knew full well that the sum he was asked for was sorely needed. Often he gave without even a request to some poor girl whose bien-aimé had gone his way and left her penniless.

"Come to see me," they would say to him, sometimes. "You must be lonely in Paris, with no sweetheart to keep you company."

Then, when he declined with a darkened brow, they would add, gayly:

"I am afraid, Monsieur Lysle, you will never see your silver, then."

One girl was so importunate, after accepting money from him, that he was missed more than a week from his customary place of dining. He did not care what these people did, he only wanted them to refrain from directing it at him.

When he came back, he found her there with the rest, eating a plate of soup and a piece of bread, that constituted her only meal. Some one whispered him that Suzette was still in trouble, and that she would be turned out of her room the next day unless she had ten francs for the landlord. He took

pains to intercept her in a side street, on her way back to her home, and offer her a louis.

"I will not take it," she said, with flashing eyes "You treat me as if I was a beggar!"

"But you surely need it!" he answered, gently.

"Listen," she said, defiantly. "To-morrow, unless I have ten francs, I shall be turned out of doors, but I will not touch your money, because you think yourself above me."

He hastened to assure her that she did him an injustice.

"I know better," said she. "You knew that I lived with André. You knew that I loved him. He has gone to his people. That is all right. We know that when the time comes they all go. He had not much to give me. I do not blame him. He thought, I suppose, that I would soon get another lover. I am not ugly. Now, I have not had enough to eat for two weeks, and shall be turned out to-morrow unless I have ten francs. But I will not be a beggar. I will not take money unless I can repay it in some way."

"You had best take it," he said, still holding it out to her.

"I will not!"

"And you will let them turn you out on the street?"

"No," she answered, recklessly.

She had a lovely face, of the brunette pattern, and he thought, as she looked at him, what a model it would make for a picture that he had long desired to paint. All the sentiments wanted were portrayed there—pride, indignation, desperate resolution. He knew what she meant to do, and he dreaded her fate. It is almost as terrible to the real Parisian

grisette to walk the boulevards in quest of prey as it would be for the average wife.

"I am an artist," he said at length, "and I have a friend who would pay you well to let him draw your face. Come to my studio to-morrow, and I will introduce him to you. You must not do silly things. You will be sorry as long as you live if you carry out the ideas you are forming."

She found the idea of having her face transferred to canvas very amusing, and she laughed lightly.

"What does he want—a witch?" she asked. "Or does he intend to paint a starving girl? I have eaten hardly anything for eight days. If I go on he might use me as a model for a skeleton."

Lysle felt her manner grating on him.

"He wants you, just as you are," said he. "Only it would be better for you to come with a good breakfast in your stomach, as the sittings are wearying. Take this louis, as I tell you. You can pay it back to me in a week, if you wish. I will not refuse to take it, if you have earned it honestly. He only wishes to draw your face, and he will certainly give you four francs an hour."

The girl paused to think.

"Only my face?" she repeated. "But I had handsome arms, too, when I had plenty to eat."

"Then begin eating again," he said, smiling, "and perhaps he may want to use them, also."

The strange idea that she could be utilized as a model had driven the anger from Suzette's mind, and before he left her she was persuaded to accept the louis as a loan, and to promise to come the next morning to his studio.

When she arrived there, she found him with his pencil ready. To her request for the friend he had

spoken of, he replied pleasantly that he himself was the artist who wanted her. He attempted to explain the motive of the picture that he desired, but her anger broke forth again, and she overwhelmed him with reproaches, at the same time dashing on his floor the silver remaining from the louis that he had given her.

"You are one who tells lies!" she cried. "I ought to have known better than to believe you! All you have called me here for is to get an excuse for making of me a beggar last night! I will get your miserable gold for you again before I sleep!"

And thus she went on, without a pause, for many minutes.

For a long while Lysle did not seem to hear her. He had taken a stool and was busily at work on his canvas. Occasionally he looked up and took a quick glance at her face, but he made no reply to her ravings. He only worked on, apparently oblivious of all the exasperating things she was saying, lost in the ardor of his labor. For some time she did not seem to know or care whether he listened or not, but when she had freed her mind of its store of venom, it dawned upon her that his attitude was indicative of contempt, if not of ridicule. At this she flew into a more violent rage than before, and catching up a paint knife that she found handy she sprang toward him like an insane person.

He was just in time to avoid the onslaught, and to catch her by the wrist.

"Oh, why did you do that?" he exclaimed, reproachfully. "I am afraid it will spoil everything!"

She followed his eyes and they rested on his can-

vas. Her face was drawn there, in all its fury and scorn.

"It is splendid!" he said, releasing her. "If you had only kept that pose for ten minutes more! I fear you can never go back to it again."

Her astonishment overpowered every other feeling.

"You were drawing a picture of *me!*"

"Undoubtedly," he answered, with mingled regard and pride. "I would gladly have paid five louis to have completed it. I shall get a medal at least if I can make it what I wanted. Why did you touch that miserable knife? The minute your hand rested on it, every feature in your face changed."

"You are a coward," she hissed, "to insult a woman! You are a cur, that is what you are, and if I had a lover I would make you fight him!"

"My poor girl!" he exclaimed, stricken with remorse. Then he gazed again at his canvas and the artist's enthusiasm overcame every other feeling. He stretched out his hands to her, but she drew indignantly away. She was not to be placated. "Let me persuade you to listen to reason," he said. "It is quite an honorable profession, that of a model. It is a fine thing to have your picture hung in a good place in the Salon. Many a titled lady would be glad to have that distinction. It is not charity. I could get much more than I should pay you for the work when it is done, but I never sell anything. I only paint for the love of it, and for the Fame that I hope to get when I am older. You are a superb model, Suzette. Say you will engage yourself to me."

The girl did not intend to be mollified so easily.

"After you have insulted me? Never!"

"It was necessary," he replied. "I did not mean anything I said, why, of course not. There is no reason why you should hate me just because it is my business to paint pictures. You are a foolish girl if you go out of here in a state of anger. I will gladly give you a good salary for weeks if you will do as I bid you. What do you care, so long as you get an honest living?"

She looked at him with a strange expression.

"I am not a model," she said coldly, "I am only a grisette."

"But," he replied, "I will soon make you one. You have a type of beauty that is rare to find. When your face is lighted up with any emotion it is positively entrancing. You do not understand, but when I have finished your picture you will see why it is worth money to me. Come, have sense! How much did André allow you?"

She hesitated some time between her resentment and her inclination to forgive him, and said at last that she used to have fifty francs a week, which included the rent of the room they both occupied and their breakfasts.

"It is not too much," said Lysle. "I will pay you the same. All you will have to do will be to give me sittings four times a week, for an hour or two. Is it a bargain?"

There was a very long pause.

"I will come because I am starving, you understand," she said. "But I do not like it. I am a grisette, and I want the life of my class. What shall I do in the evening, or on Sundays? I cannot go to places alone. I will sit for you because I do not like hunger, but as soon as I can do better, you will lose me. I do not fancy going on the boule-

vards alone. I am afraid I could not do it. I will come to you. Only, I hope it will not last long."

Lysle was content. He worked hard every day on his new painting, hiding it from all of his companion artists, and even from his dear friend and master, M. Jouanneau. He still attended the life classes of his instructor, which drew from the nude each Tuesday and Friday afternoons. And at one of these he saw a new student who was not unknown to him. It was Arthur Peck.

He had not seen Arthur for a long time, and he was much surprised to find him here, in the rôle of an artist. He had no reason to believe that the young man had any talent or experience that should lead him in his direction, and he was not long in making up his mind that the novelty of the sight he was to witness, and not any love of art, had drawn him there. Worshiping his profession most ardently, Lysle felt that the presence of a mere inspector on such an occasion was an insult, and hastened to make his protest to M. Jouanneau, who was still in his own private studio.

M. Jouanneau told him that he knew nothing about Mr. Peck, except that he had applied the day before to join the class, and had paid the fee demanded. If it were true that he was no artist, and had come merely as an idle spectator, he would return him his money and ask him to leave.

Peck was awaiting the opening of the séance with some satisfaction when the old professor came to him and asked how long he had been attending art schools. Instantly it flashed upon the youth that Lysle was to blame for this interference, and he grew pale with anger. His only reply was that he had paid his money for a certain number of lessons

and that he proposed to have them. After that, if the professor did not wish him to continue, he could say so. This confirmed the suspicions that had been formed. M. Jouanneau tendered him his money and requested him to depart. But this Peck flatly refused to do. Seeing that there was a disturbance brewing, many of the other students gathered around them.

"I have as good a right to stay as any one else who has paid his money," said Peck, defiantly. "And as for that Mr. Melrose, who has made all this trouble, I would thank him to attend to his own business!"

Lysle had purposely kept out of the crowd that surrounded the disputants, but when he heard his name mentioned he walked over to the others.

"You are no artist," he said, "and have no right here. This is not the place to witness a spectacle. I have told M. Jouanneau so, and I think we shall all agree upon the matter."

The students, with one voice, acceded to this proposition. Some further time was spent in useless argument with the young man, who would not consent either to accept his money or to leave the room. One or two of the students proposed audibly to put him out, but this M. Jouanneau would not permit. He was a very gentle man, and was not quite sure whether the law was wholly on his side. On one thing he was, however, quite determined. The séance should not proceed with this outsider there.

"Young gentlemen," he said, after exhausting all his patience, "there will be no lessons to-day. I will send you word when they will be resumed."

Peck saw that he was out-generalled, and he left the place, uttering imprecations and casting the

blackest looks at Lysle. He was thoroughly enraged, and determined to have revenge for what he considered his unwarrantable interference.

It happened that he repaired, that same evening, to the Restaurant de la Republique. He did not think anything about seeing Lysle, as he had often been there in former times without meeting him. And, as a matter of fact, Lysle was not visiting this restaurant on this particular week, for the reason that he did not like to meet Suzette. He had his model in his mind's eye in a very different pose from the one she was in the habit of assuming around that gay board, and he did not wish to spoil his illusions. Suzette was there, however, and some of the others whom Arthur had known in the former time, and he was welcomed with a certain politeness, though he had never been a favorite. He soon learned that Suzette was alone, and as she was the only grisette there of whom this was true, he was not long in finding his way to her side. When she left the restaurant he accompanied her and she told him her story—all about André's leaving for home, and how she was now supporting herself as a model for a painter.

"A model—a nude model?" he asked, surveying her with sharpened curiosity.

When she explained to him as well as she could the kind of model she had become, his disappointment was plainly evident.

"I want to join some class where they draw from the nude," he said. "Do you know of any?"

"I think they have one at the studio of the master of M. Melrose," she answered. "I will ask him, if you desire."

He started in surprise.

"You know M. Melrose, then?"

"Perfectly," she responded. "It is for him that I am posing. He says the picture he is at work upon will be one of the finest in the next Salon. I do not like the work—that posing—it is very dull. But one must have bread, and there is no other way just now."

An opportunity had come, most unexpectedly, for a revenge upon his enemy. Arthur decided then and there, to take the protection of this girl upon himself, in the hope that thereby he might spoil Lysle's picture. She was only too glad to exchange her dull days for the gayeties to which he was ready to introduce her, and when the time came for her next sitting she wrote a letter at her new lover's dictation, stating that she did not care to pose any more. As Arthur expected, the young artist came the next day to Suzette's rooms, to demand an explanation; and it gave him the keenest pleasure to be able to meet him there and to hear him told that mademoiselle would be otherwise engaged and unable on any account to accommodate him.

Suzette, with the fickleness of her sex, thought it only good amusement to assist Arthur in his triumph. He talked it all over with her in advance, and when Lysle came they were there together to receive him.

"M. Melrose, this is my friend, M. Peck," was Suzette's introduction, as Lysle stood, astounded, on the threshold of her apartment. He recovered himself in a moment, and said that he wished a few minutes of private conversation.

"You can say anything before M. Peck," replied Suzette, lighting a cigarette and offering Lysle another, which he declined. "It is quite the same now. We are one, you understand."

Arthur had walked to a window and was looking out on a court-yard, with pretended nonchalance. But one glance convinced Lysle that he was at the bottom of the whole affair, and he felt an almost irresistible inclination to kick him.

"You have written to me declining to sit again as my model," he said, recovering. "Was it not understood that you were to come until the picture was finished?"

"Not at all," she answered, laughing. "You will recollect that I said I would only come till I could do better. And that"—she indicated Peck by a motion of her head—"I have succeeded in doing."

"But," he said, desperately, "you have been paid for nearly a week in advance."

She smiled again.

"That is true." She turned to Arthur. "Will you have the kindness to give me the fifty francs which I owe monsieur?"

Peck turned away from the window and took out his purse.

"I decline to take the money back," said Lysle, warmly. "You have received it for certain work and you are obliged to perform it."

A very broad laugh was on the face of Mr. Arthur Peck as Suzette appealed to him to know if this was the law.

"I understand that it is not," he said, grimly. "I paid for twelve lessons of an artist myself, the other day, and he declined to give them to me, offering me back my money. He said it was the only thing I could claim."

The young artist saw easily enough that he was being ridiculed, and fearing that in the state of his temper he might do something rash, he turned with-

out another word and left the place, the sound of loud laughter following him down the stairs.

He went back to his studio, and surveyed his great effort with a saddened look. It would have taken only three or four more sittings to make it perfect. Could he finish it without his model? It was a great risk. The deep regret that he felt at his loss counterbalanced his anger at the man who was responsible for it. It was evident that he must finish the picture without her. He took up his brush and tried to go on with the work, but his hand was too unsteady. He could not trust himself to do it then.

The next day he tried again, but the risk frightened him. The day after it was the same, and at last he put the picture regretfully away and resumed his ordinary work. A fortnight later he came suddenly upon Suzette in the street. He would not have addressed her, but she stopped him.

"I am sorry for you—I am, really," she said, as if she meant it. "I was angry that day but I had forgiven you. If I could have come to let you finish the picture I would have done so. You see, it is as I told you. I am not a model, I am a grisette. My lover has a right to command me, and he says I am not to go. He does not like you, there has been trouble somewhere between you, has there not? We have moved to new rooms in a much better street, the Rue Marbeuf. I do not care for that. I really liked the old ones better, for I knew every one in the neighborhood. He has given me many pretty things, but I would rather have André and a crust. I hope you will never have any words with him. He seems to me like a man who would kill, if he was excited

Good-by, monsieur. I hope you will not blame me for what I could not help."

Lysle was too dispirited to answer her, and he knew all he could say would count for nothing. It was only a little while after these occurrences that his twenty-first birthday came, and he set sail for America, after nearly six years' absence from his native shores.

CHAPTER IX.

"A LITTLE LIKE LYING."

Stanley Melrose had been very thoughtful ever since he learned that his cousin was about to visit America. His large business interests, his extensive law practice, all the trusts with which he had become possessed, seemed to take a secondary place in his mind. He could think of nothing but Lysle and Rosalie and Miss Steiner, and the problem that would soon confront him in relation to them. He had Rosalie on his side; of that he felt no doubt. Miss Steiner would certainly turn against him if she found an ally strong enough to make it a safe thing to do; of that he felt no doubt, either. In a guardianship that comprised three persons it was easy to see that two constituted a clear majority. If Miss Steiner and Lysle should decide, up and down, that they would be the controllers of Rosalie's future, it would not be an easy thing to deprive them of that right.

He decided to meet Lysle in the most affable manner and to fight with all his diplomacy to prevent a

complete union of the opposition forces. He and Lysle corresponded but little, while Miss Steiner had had, he knew, a good many letters from the young man. It was to be his task to outwit them both, and in the strength of his determination to do this he rested.

One of his first ideas was to go to the wharf and meet his cousin when he landed. But Stanley never decided upon anything of importance without due deliberation, and after thinking it over he concluded that such a course would have too transparent a reason. Although he and Lysle had never quarreled, they had not been, even when at school, intimates. He would let Miss Steiner meet him, if she chose, and give her all the chance she needed to gain his ear. He knew that he should be sure to see him within a few hours of his arrival, as he dined with Miss Steiner and Rosalie, and it would be natural for Lysle to be invited to join them.

Several days before the young man was due in port, Stanley assumed a brighter aspect than usual.

"Lysle's steamer ought to arrive either Monday or Tuesday," said he, at table. "It seems so long since he went away! What a change he will find in me—from a schoolboy to a man in business! And he has done well, I am told. I learn from a client, who is a dealer in art goods, that his name is already familiar to painters here, and that the greatest things are expected of him. I suppose he has grown so we shall hardly know him. I hope he will not hurry back to Europe. There ought to be inspiration for an artist in such a country as we have here. He will not find finer views anywhere, I will wager, than some of those in the interior of this continent."

Miss Steiner wondered what was behind all this, for she never thought of taking it at its apparent value, but she said nothing to indicate what was in her mind. As he had spoken of Lysle as a landscape artist, she ventured the remark that what he most excelled in, as she understood it, was in painting human faces and figures.

"Well, let him take a few studies from our Rosalie," he answered, almost gayly. "He would have to search far to find a better specimen of bright and happy childhood. What do you say, little one? Would you not like to have your picture painted by our cousin, when he comes home?"

Rosalie did not care anything about pictures, either of herself or of other things, but she saw that Stanley wanted her to assent, and that was enough for her. She answered accordingly, that if Stanley wanted Lysle to paint her picture she should be very glad to sit for him.

"And how shall he paint you? Sitting on the rocks at Newport, with one stockingless foot paddling in the water, or riding one of those ponies in the Park?"

"Those ponies are very slow beasts," responded the child. "I wish I had one of the mustangs that you taught me to ride out in the West. I would stick some of the eagle feathers in my hair, as I did then, and cling without any saddle to the back of the animal, and that would make something worth painting."

He glanced across the table at Miss Steiner, with a look that was intended to assume that they were on an intimate footing.

"But you are to be a young lady soon," he said. "I think, on the whole, we will ask Lysle to paint

you in your best dress, sitting in an arm-chair, in the correct attitude. Then you can keep it to study by."

Rosalie did not reply to this. She half believed that he was joking, but she did not like to proceed on this supposition when Miss Steiner was present. She realized that a change had suddenly taken place in his manner, and she did not know exactly how to answer him.

When Lysle came at last, Miss Steiner had more than an hour's conversation with him before Stanley arrived. She had given him hints in her recent letters that she might need his help, but when he was actually at her side, and she was asked for specifications, she hardly knew how to state her case. He was given an opportunity to see Rosalie, and his admiration for the healthy beauty of the child was most pronounced. It seemed a hard thing to ask his aid in opposition to a guardian whose "methods" had produced this splendid specimen.

"I never saw a more perfect child!" he exclaimed, when Rosalie had left the room.

"Yes," said Miss Steiner, confusedly, and not without a pardonable pride in the enthusiasm of his tone. "Physically, she *is* perfect. But her mind, Lysle, that is the point. She has had none of the mental training of the ordinary child. She has not even been treated as a child at all. Her thoughts are in channels much too advanced for her years. I fear that when we try to mould her intellect there will be a great deal of trouble."

Lysle listened to her with some surprise.

"I do not understand why you have neglected these things," he said.

"He—Stanley—had other ideas," she replied.

He could not comprehend.

"But you had the entire control of her until two years ago—until he reached his majority."

It distressed her to tell him the truth, it hurt her pride, but she knew no other way.

"No, he has managed everything from the day you sailed for France."

"And he was only seventeen, then! Why?"

She looked at him appealingly, as if craving sympathy in her confession.

"Stanley was older at seventeen than most boys. You know that. I did not like to risk a conflict with him, and things went on from one to another before I realized what was being done."

Still it all seemed very strange to him.

"Tell me exactly what you complain of," he said.

When she tried to do this, she succeeded badly. It was no special thing, but everything together. He had taken all her rights and duties upon himself. Rosalie looked to him for instruction in every act of her life.

"I am hardly as much to her as her French governess," she said, in conclusion. "Mr. Vandenhoff's will gave me equal power over her with you and Stanley, and yet I am treated as if I was nobody."

"He shall treat you respectfully. I will see to that," said Lysle.

Her confusion increased.

"Oh, he does that, of course. I do not know how to explain it to you. If you stay here long enough you will understand it. I have borne it patiently, feeling that it would have to end when you came. Watch the child when he is present, and you will

see how little influence any one else is likely to have on her life. It is not for to-day that I am uneasy, it is for the years that are coming."

He could not help feeling that she worried unnecessarily, and he thought the best way for him was to quietly take in the situation. When Stanley came, at lunch time, having walked all the way up from his office, Lysle had to admire the tall, athletic fellow, whose full beard made him look at least five years older than he was. Stanley had improved with time, that was evident. A gentleman on the steamer had happened to ask Lysle whether he was any relation to the rising young lawyer and real estate operator, and had told him what a prominent figure Stanley was making in the metropolis. He expected to feel a slight sensation of awe at this "prominent citizen," whom, even in boyhood days, he had thought one of the wisest persons that he knew. The breezy atmosphere that his cousin brought in from his walk and the hearty grasp of the hand that he gave him, dispelled these reflections, however, and they welcomed each other more like brothers than relations of a less near tie.

Miss Steiner noticed the impression that Stanley made, and her heart sank.

"You are taller, and yet not as much so as I anticipated," said Stanley, looking his cousin over. "I don't think you are any handsomer, but that was not to be expected. There must be limits to that sort of thing, where men are concerned. You are older, but not quite enough for the years you claim. I am afraid, my boy, that you have staid too many hours each day in your studio, and too few in the open air."

Lysle responded to this that he had never cared

much for outdoor exercise, and that he could not hope to rival his cousin, if he tried it ever so long.

"Here is a specimen of what nature can do!" cried Stanley, taking the little Rosalie by the hand, as she entered the room. "Feel of that for flesh," he added, drawing the child forward, and playfully pinching her arms to show their hardness. "She is as strong as most children of twice her age. We will go up in the country and down to the shore, by-and-by, and let you see her at her best. There isn't a horse that can throw her, and she can find a ten cent piece in the bottom of a mill-pond."

Lunch being served, they all sat down to it, and the conversation drifted naturally on things American and European. There was enough to talk about, as may readily be imagined, but Stanley managed to get much more information than he imparted. He professed himself quite in love with Lysle's descriptions of Paris, and said he must certainly go there, if his business ever gave him time.

"Ah, you artists," he exclaimed, "who see nothing but the beautiful side of life, how you must pity us poor business men who have to keep the world going. With me it is a steady grind from one end of the year to another, and all the recreation I can take is a stroll with Rosalie, or a Sunday in the country with her and Miss Steiner. Our walks in the city are mostly in the very early morning, and it would tire you to keep up with us, I am afraid."

Lysle remarked that he could not understand why a man of Stanley's property should burden himself with such a rush of work so early in life.

"It would have been more sensible, it seems to me," he said, "to have taken a year or two for travel, at the start. Now that you have got all

tangled up in affairs you will never extricate yourself, if you are not careful."

"I did not plan it," was the reply, and the speaker drew a rather long breath as he did so. "I found myself at twenty-one with my own property suddenly put into my hands, and what was of much more importance, all of—all of another person's." He silently indicated Rosalie. "I found that both these fortunes were invested in much less remunerative ways than was possible, and in changing the investments I made several successful deals that attracted the attention of other people, who came to me, asking that I do as much for them. Then, when I was admitted to the bar, clients came much faster than I deserved; and take it altogether, I *am* a rather busier man than I ought to be. But I shall take my vacation yet, and when I do you will see me on your side of the ocean."

Both his auditors noticed that he had unconsciously taken it for granted that Lysle intended to return to France.

"I suppose," said Lysle, wisely, "that I shall have to examine those accounts of yours that I am interested in, and see that they are satisfactory. It will be a perfunctory thing, of course, but it is my legal duty."

"I shall be only too glad to render an account to you," was the reply, "and the sooner you come the better. This afternoon, if you wish."

Lysle laughed.

"Not quite so soon as that," said he. "I have my private affairs to attend to first, with Mr. Dennin. But I shall call on you," he added, with another laugh, "I shall be strict in my investigations, too. If you have anything wrong to be discovered, you

will have just about time enough to get over the line into Canada."

This seemed sufficiently amusing to brighten up everybody, and the subject wandered for a time into other channels.

"How much do you think Mr. Dennin has ready for you?" asked Stanley, after a pause.

"Something like sixty-five thousand dollars, he says," replied Lysle. "It is all in paper, and I could carry it away in a small bag. You had much more, I believe. Your father had more of the business instinct in him than mine, as you have more than I. It is certain that I shall never increase my pile, while yours will reach, there is no knowiug what dimensions."

Stanley bowed silently. He made no secret of his intention to become a very rich man.

"You could get a good deal of money for your pictures, though," he said, presently. "I have been told that you are doing most remarkable work."

"Have you?" said Lysle. It pleased him immensely to think that his reputation had already crossed the Atlantic. "But I am doing as I once told you I should. I am keeping everything I paint."

"That is a good idea, too," said Stanley, shrewdly, "for by-and-by, when you are the most famous painter in the world, you can name your own prices. And another advantage will be gained," he continued. "Your earlier work, that must necessarily exhibit some crudeness, will not be in the market to your injury."

Lysle hastened to say that he had no avaricious intentions in the matter at all. He only felt that he did not wish to paint for money, and that the highest

incentive in art should not be the amount of gold that a piece of canvas would bring.

"You will make the money of the family, Stanley," said he, "and I shall make the fame. Is it not a fair division?"

"But there is fame to be gained at the bar, also," replied the other, slightly piqued.

"Oh, yes," said Lysle; but he did not speak as if he thoroughly appreciated the fact.

Neither of the cousins seemed to realize that Miss Steiner had no part in this conversation, except the one of listener.

It was Rosalie's habit to say nothing unless addressed, when others were present, and she grew quite jealous of Lysle, before the long meal was over. After lunch Lysle went to Mr. Dennin's office, and passed the rest of the afternoon there, while Stanley went to his own place of business. The child walked out with her French governess, but she found the day very dreary. Something had come between her and her natural companion, and she did not like the change.

At dinner they were all together again, though Lysle had taken up his residence at an adjacent hotel, and when it was ended Stanley was struck for the first time with the sad look on the child's countenance. Divining its cause, he told her he had no intention of missing their usual evening walk, and she joyfully went for her hat. Lysle and Miss Steiner were asked to excuse them, and neither made any objection to doing so. Stanley wanted to show the woman that he had no fear of leaving her and Lysle alone. She was more depressed than ever, when he and Rosalie had sauntered forth, and got along very slowly in her endeavors to make Lysle under-

stand the points of difference between her and their cousin.

Although it was rather later than Stanley and Rosalie were in the habit of starting, both of them were so glad to be alone together that the hour had no significance. When they arrived at Madison square they turned in to Madison avenue and walked all the way to Forty-second street before he proposed that they set upon their return. They had talked of nothing in particular until this moment, but as they turned to retrace their steps, Rosalie suddenly astonished him by a strange inquiry:

"Is it right to tell lies, Stanley—ever?"

It was his way to draw out her full meaning before he answered her, and he tried to do it in this case.

"Give me an example," he said.

"You do not like Lysle, and yet you pretend to him that you do. Is not that a sort of lying? And is it right?"

As mature as he had found the young mind growing under his manipulations, he was surprised at the keenness of her perception.

"I never told you I did not like Lysle," he answered, evasively.

"Oh, no, you did not need to tell me."

"There is something that we call courtesy," he continued, slowly, "which makes us treat well even people for whom we have no particular affection, especially if they are our relations."

She looked thoughtful.

"Relations are cousins, brothers, and people like that?"

"Yes."

"What relations have I, Stanley? Not many, I think."

"No. You have no father or mother, brother or sister; not even an uncle or aunt. The only relations that you have who are near enough even to be called cousins are Miss Steiner, Lysle and I."

She was revolving the question in her mind.

"Then I ought to love all of you very much, ought I not?"

"We are more than your relations, in this case," he said, with an effort. "We are also your guardians, and you are bound to respect us as you would your parents, if they were still living."

She had heard something like this before, but not having seen Lysle till so recently, the idea had not thoroughly taken possession of her mind.

"You three are my guardians—one just as much as the other?"

He gulped down something that stuck in his throat at the unpleasant fact that she thus baldly stated.

"One just as much as the other," he admitted.

They walked several blocks before she spoke again, and he did not think it wise to disturb her train of thought.

"Supposing, sometime, Stanley," she said, looking up at last, "that one of you should want me to do one thing and another should want me to do something different?"

"That is hardly likely to happen," he answered.

"Yes, it is," she replied. "It will happen sometime, I am sure; and I want to know beforehand what I am to do."

They were such companions, used to these confidences for the past four years or more, and yet

she had never said anything that affected him as much as this.

"What would you like to do, in a case like that?" he asked.

"I should like to obey *you*."

His pleasure at this naïve confession was so great that he stooped down and put his arm around the child, a thing he was not in the habit of doing. She realized as much as he that this action was caused by sudden and violent emotion, and it affected her intensely.

"We must see to it," he said, presently, "that no question comes up on which your guardians need to differ. We all desire only what is best for you, I am sure. If you feel any difference between us, you must be careful and not show it. That will be one way to prevent trouble."

"But it will be a kind of lying, won't it, Stanley?" she asked, reverting to the former inquiry.

"Hardly," he said. "It is your duty to treat us all with respect, and you need not consider it falsehood if you only do that. Miss Steiner and I have had no trouble in agreeing about you, and Lysle ought not to want anything that is unreasonable."

She clasped tightly the hand that she had taken a few minutes before.

"But he will, Stanley. I am sure of it. He will propose things that you will not like. And I want very much to know what we are to do when that time comes."

For several minutes he was silent. Then he said:

"If he proposed anything that I thought very much against your interests—so much that I could not possibly agree with him, and if Miss Steiner was on his side, I should have to go to the judges and get

them to settle it. If it was an ordinary thing, I should try and let him have his way. But, pshaw! Nothing like that will happen. You must be as friendly with him as you are with me, so that he will have no cause for complaint on that score. If he wants you to walk with him, or give up any part of your time to him, you must do it as if you were quite willing. I shall depend on you, Rosalie, to help me a great deal in that way. And, really, he is a pleasant fellow, you know, and can be of use to you, beside, in your French. He has lived in Paris until he talks like a native."

She look up at him again, for he had taught her always to be most punctilious in all matters of conscience.

"There *will* be a difference, only I must not let him *know* it. Is that what you mean, Stanley?"

"That is it, exactly."

"It *is* a little like lying, isn't it?"

He did not say anything to this, for it seemed to him that the child was right in her estimate of the transaction to which he had advised her. But look which way he might, he could not see any other way out of the dilemma that confronted them.

CHAPTER X.

"I NEVER KISS GENTLEMEN!"

When the height of the summer season came, Miss Steiner and Lysle, with Rosalie, of course, went to Cape May. Stanley knew that they would have to go somewhere, and when the place was to be decided

upon he selected Cape May as the best of those named on account of its accessibility from the city, whenever he should find himself able to run down there. His business had now grown to such proportions that he did not like to neglect it, and yet he wanted to see his ward quite often. Cape May was a good place. There was excellent bathing there, and the resort was considered very healthy.

Rosalie astonished Lysle, the first time he went in bathing with her, at the capacity she showed as a swimmer. She was still but eight years of age, and he supposed that he would have to take the same care of her as is usually given to young children when in the water. Probably he had a dim idea that she would scream when the waves touched her limbs, and have to be encouraged to go out as far as it would be necessary for the water to reach her chin, while he held to her clothing and repeated assurances that he would protect her. But the lithe figure darted from him at the water's edge, and with a joyous rush the child threw herself into the brine, going under like an expert, and reappearing again some seconds later fifteen feet further away. Lysle had a momentary fright as he saw her disappear, and made his way as rapidly as possible toward the place where she had gone down. When he saw her come up again he swam toward her in the belief that she was being swept out to sea by some kind of undertow. At which Rosalie, who saw him coming, dared him to a race, and took such bold strokes away from the land that he was greatly alarmed, and called to her to return at once.

"Have you a cramp, or anything?" she asked, anxiously, as she swam to where he was, evidently under the impression that he required assistance.

As she spoke she poised herself in the water as comfortably as a duck, seemingly without the slightest effort.

"I am all right," he answered, slightly out of breath, for his anxiety had contributed to wind him. "I was afraid you were in danger. I do not think it is wise for you to go out beyond your depth."

"Why not?" she asked, astonished at the idea. "I could swim an hour without being tired. Stanley used to take me out half a mile. It is not much fun swimming in the dirty water along the shore. I wish you would go with me. I think I could race you back and make you rather tired."

He was tired already, not being anything of an expert in the art of natation, and slowly paddled nearer the land, where he could find a resting place for his feet. Rosalie followed him, not seeming to like it, however.

"I did not know you were such a swimmer," he said, when she joined him. "I have only had a little experience in the swimming schools of the Seine, and at Ostend and Boulogne."

Miss Steiner, who was waiting among the spectators on the shore, came to speak to them.

"He does not like to have me go out," said the child, rather sorrowfully, to her. "You know how well I can swim. I am as safe in the water as anywhere. Do you not think so?"

"Perhaps," said Miss Steiner. "But it is different when Stanley is not here. If anything should happen to you when you were out there alone, what could we do? I do not wish you to take any risks."

"Very well," said Rosalie. She had been taught to obey without serious argument.

A crowd had gathered on the border of the beach, composed both of bathers and of the ordinary non-bathing spectators. Rosalie had passed a week or two there in the previous season, and some of them remembered her feats and related them to the others. Sensations were very scarce, and there was general disappointment when the child left the water and went with Miss Steiner to her bath-house. Lysle fancied that there was a species of contempt in the glances that pursued him as he followed, and it did not add to his ease.

"Confound them!" he thought, with anger. "I can paint a picture that will be hung in a place of honor in the Paris Salon, but to these fools I am nobody because I am not a great swimmer! Stanley, who could not draw the picture of a tree, will come here and excite their admiration, because he has learned to propel himself through the waves like a dolphin! What different standards of intelligence people have!"

Rosalie had never had the least idea of comparing Lysle with Stanley, but he had certainly fallen more than ever in her mind on account of this event. She had been disappointed in her swim, for one thing; she had missed the chance of exercising her feminine privilege of conquest by showing the guests at Cape May what a fine natator she was. But, more than this, she had to blush at the poor talents of her protector. Her only comfort was in the knowledge that Stanley would come in a few days.

Lysle got her all to himself that afternoon for an hour, and had a long talk with her. He drew out all her life on the frontier, and saw the kindling of the eye with which she narrated her rides on horseback with the Indian and half-breed children, her

catching of fish in the little brooks, her sitting about the fires in the evening, when the howling of wolves could be heard plainly in the distance. It was in a lake there that Stanley had taught her to swim, and before the season was over she used to dive with the young aborigines for pieces of money thrown into the clear water. She was not apt to show great enthusiasm, having been taught to repress her sentiments, but the awakened recollections were too strong.

"You like the frontier better than New York, I judge," he said, after listening to her.

"Oh, yes," she said quickly. "I should have been willing to stay there all my life, if Stanley had wished it."

It struck him powerfully that she would have gone to the Frozen Sea, or to Terra del Fuego, "if Stanley had wished it."

"You would not have had the opportunity to learn things there that you have in the East," he suggested.

"Not the *same* things," she admitted. "But Stanley tells me that all the things worth knowing are not in books. I shall soon be nine years old, and I do not yet know how to read."

He was much disappointed at this, and said so without reserve.

"You must learn at once," said he. "I do not see what Miss Steiner is thinking of to make you wait so long."

She felt it an imputation upon her acquirements.

"I can speak three languages, and that is something. And I can make myself understood in the Sioux tongue. And I am very strong, and—" she

hesitated, doubtful whether it would be too impolite to say it—"and I can swim and ride."

He winced a little at the thrust.

"But reading is so necessary," he said. "Nearly nine years old! Why at nine I had read half of the great English authors and many of the poets. I shall certainly speak to Miss Steiner."

She noticed that he persisted in speaking of Miss Steiner as if that lady was the natural arbiter of her destiny, and it made the child more determined than ever to direct all her allusions to Stanley.

"I wish you would speak to me always in French," she said. "Stanley said you would be of great advantage to me in my accent."

He was well pleased at this, and promised to try to remember it. And, as a beginning, he turned the conversation at once into that language.

"You must learn to read," he repeated. "If you wait much longer you will be behind the other young ladies when you grow up."

"I think I learn things rapidly," she responded. "You shall see how fast I will acquire reading. If it pleases you, I should like to learn to read in French first. I think English will come easier after that."

She had never deceived any one before in her life, and had had no cause to. How did the art come so easily with what she regarded as the necessity for it? It was the immediate outgrowth of Stanley's attitude toward his cousin, which she realized so quickly was not a thoroughly truthful one. Rosalie knew that Stanley wanted her to learn to read French before she did English. She knew, also, that Lysle would not be prejudiced in favor of the plan if she told him it was of his cousin's origination.

So she said, "*I* think," and he accepted the idea at once, as a compliment to himself.

"I will talk to Miss Steiner," he said, again, "and if she is willing, you may begin at once. Your governess has nothing else to do here, and you would be willing, I suppose, to devote two or three hours each day to it, even this summer?"

She entered on her new study with delight. She knew that Stanley would be pleased at her finesse, when she told him of it, and the result confirmed her opinion. He said nothing, but his manner showed that he was gratified. He came, as she had expected he would, on the first Saturday night after her arrival, and remained over till Monday morning.

Rosalie had always been taught to repress all manifestations of great joy or sorrow, and Lysle could not justly estimate the pleasure that she felt to see Stanley again by its mere outward expression. After dinner she and her eldest guardian went off for a walk alone on the beach, where for an hour they exchanged confidences.

Something had been troubling Miss Steiner for a long time, and she thought this a good opportunity to broach it to Lysle.

"Rosalie has had hardly any religious training," she said, as they sat together in a corner of one of the piazzas.

"Ah!" was his only comment.

"A child—a—a girl," she continued, "needs religious instruction. Don't you think so?"

To tell the truth, he had never thought much about it. For himself, he had never entered a place of worship except as a sight-seer since he left Brooks Academy, where he found it a regulation part of the

course he was pursuing. He had no definite religious opinions. He called himself a Protestant as so many others do, merely to signify that he was not a Roman Catholic. Lysle was not an atheist, but he went no further than that. Still he did have an idea that a certain amount of religion was a good thing for women, and he assented mildly to Miss Steiner's proposition.

"Stanley has managed everything so entirely his own way," she went on, gratified at his concurrence, "that I have not made the stand I ought in reference to this matter. But Rosalie is growing older, and it is time something was done. Now, to-morrow morning, the first thing he will want will be to take her into the water. I don't think that is a good idea."

Lysle looked at her rather blankly. He could not quite understand the connection between religion and bathing. A notion that she had some thought of the significance of baptism entered his head, but was immediately dismissed.

"I do not quite understand," he said.

"I know," she replied, with a disappointed expression, "that you have lived in Paris, where such things are looked upon differently than they are here. Rosalie is, however, an American girl, and must be treated as such. And I cannot help thinking that it sets a bad example."

He was as much in the dark as ever.

"Is bathing so wrong, then?" he asked, trying to reconcile her attitude with that she had taken on the day when he had gone into the water with the child, having her apparent assent.

"It is not considered, I think, by refined people here, the best way to spend the Sabbath."

"The Sabbath!" He could dimly remember having heard that title applied to Sunday, by some clergyman of his boyhood. So that was the trouble.

"I cannot see what harm an hour in the water would do," he answered, thoughtfully. "Your places of amusement are all closed, I believe. You have no theatres, or gardens—or circuses—open on that day?"

Miss Steiner looked properly shocked.

"Well, I should hope not!" she said. "Those customs of Continental Europe have not yet gained a foothold in the Eastern part of America."

"What *are* people permitted to do?"

"They go to church, for one thing," was the reply. "Then walking, driving—and—and reading are permissible."

He had become so gallicized that he was genuinely puzzled at her distinctions.

"Is bathing more wicked than driving?" he asked. "And if so, why?"

"It is certainly more like—like play," she answered lamely.

"Oh, there is a rule against playing, is there?" he said, smiling. "You must excuse me, cousin. I have been so long away that I really had forgotten some of the ways of my native country. If nobody bathes on Sunday, perhaps Stanley will not care to be the only exception."

She found it so much more difficult to make her views plain to him than she had expected, that she grew quite discouraged every time she tried it.

"A good many do bathe," she admitted, "but not the—the best people. Respect for customs is almost a necessity if one would move in the upper circles. A thing which might be harmless in itself

becomes a crime when it runs counter to the opinions of those who rule society."

He laughed inwardly at this, for he hated society with a cordial hatred. He had seen some of it in France, and found it a dreadful bore. He loved Bohemia better, but perhaps there might be something different for a young American heiress. Besides this, when he came to think it over, he was not anxious that Stanley should have too early an opportunity to show the people of Cape May how much better swimmer he was than his cousin. He recollected uneasily the exhibition he had made of his own weakness that other morning, when the child shamed him before a thousand of them. It was not a creditable thing to influence his mind, but we are all human, and the remembrance had its effect as a make-weight.

"If, when the morning comes, Stanley proposes to take her," he said, "you can advance your objection and I will give you my moral support. Only, it must not be elevated into anything like a test case. If he insists on taking her in, having done so often before, I shall not cast my vote positively against him. You can tell him what you have told me, and we will hear what he has to say."

This was far from contenting the woman, but it was evidently the best she could do. It would not answer to attempt to coerce Lysle. She was obliged to take exactly as much as he would give her, and it would be folly to try to press him beyond his judgment. She began to wonder whether she had not merely exchanged one autocrat for two. This was not what she had dreamed of for six years.

Stanley and Rosalie returned shortly, and found them still on the piazza.

"It will be splendid bathing in the morning, I think," were Stanley's first words. "The wind has freshened and the surf will be tremendous. We will go away out, Rosalie, into the white-caps."

Miss Steiner glanced involuntarily at Lysle, who smilingly signalled her to proceed. She found it harder than she had anticipated, however.

"I think the best people here do not bathe Sunday row," she ventured.

Stanley was a man who thought quickly. He had no doubt that these words of hers were part of a pre-arranged plan, and he wondered how firm the alliance was between his cousins.

"The fewer there are in, the better I shall like it," he replied. "I would not miss that surf to-morrow, if it is what it seems likely to be, for a Supreme Court decision. You know, Lysle," he added, turning to that young man, "that I have not been in the water yet this season. I think there is no other amusement of which I am so passionately fond. There will be plenty of bathers, unless the style has much changed within a year. If the best people lose the fun, so much the worse for them."

At this he abruptly turned the conversation into another channel, as though he considered that one exhausted. He began to tell Lysle of a real estate deal in which he had just embarked, which was morally certain to pay large profits, and offered to admit him to a share. He said, with a smile, that he knew well how little he cared for money, but after all he must invest what he had inherited in something, and why not in a place where it would double in five years as well as in another where it would

take fifteen to accomplish that result? They talked the matter over for a long time, leaving Miss Steiner stranded high and dry, metaphorically, on the shore; and feeling piqued, she withdrew at last and left them there with Rosalie.

It was nearly ten o'clock when Stanley noticed that the child was standing at his elbow, evidently waiting to speak to him.

"It is time I was abed," she said, as he turned to her.

"Why, yes, it *is* late for you," he answered, consulting his watch. "You should have gone before."

"I did not like to interrupt you," she replied, "and neither did I like to go without saying good-night."

He took the hand that she held out to him.

"Good-night, Rosalie," he said. "Sleep well, and in the morning I will call for you very early."

She took Lysle's hand in the same way. He had an idea that this leave-taking was too formal for such a child and he thoughtlessly asked her if she would not also give him a kiss.

She drew sharply away from him at the proposition.

"I never kiss gentlemen!" she said, coldly.

"But I am your cousin—your guardian," he answered, half jocosely. Then he added, smilingly: "You surely have kissed Stanley."

The little figure shrank together, as if it had received a blow.

"Never! Never, in my life!" she exclaimed.

There was something about her manner that made Lysle very uncomfortable. A feeling possessed him as if he had unintentionally insulted a woman—a

grown woman—which nothing in the world would have made him do wittingly.

"I do not think kissing is healthy for children," Stanley explained. "It is not only that I have refrained myself, but I have instructed the maids and governesses she has had to follow the same practice. I think many parents go to absurd lengths in that sort of thing. She has treated you as well as she does the rest of us, Lysle," he added, lightly.

"Good-night, Stanley," said the child again. Her voice had grown suddenly harsh.

"Good-night," he answered, cheerily. Then he started up. "If you will excuse me a minute, Lysle, I will go as far as her room with her. We are not at home, you know, and I shall feel safer."

As he crossed the large hall and began to ascend the stairs, Rosalie put her hand in his, and looked up into his face with such a strange look that he stopped short. No one was near them. She seemed about to burst into tears, but with her extraordinary self-restraint she kept them back.

"Well, my child?" he whispered.

"He had no right to ask me to kiss him!" she exclaimed, while her frame shook with the suppressed emotion.

"Hush!" he responded, gently. "He meant nothing by it. It is the custom in France, and in many places in America, to kiss a child when she retires."

"It is a bad custom!" she cried. "I would not have permitted him. No, Stanley, I would not!"

He smiled down at her, glad beyond expression.

"You will see, when you think of it, that these words do not sound prettily," said he, gently.

"However, we will say no more about it. Good-night."

He left her at her door and went back to his cousin, ill at ease in spite of himself. Their conversation languished after that and soon they separated for the night.

The first sound that Lysle heard in the morning was the voice of Rosalie talking with animation about the swim she had had with Stanley in the breakers. They had gone out for their bath at five o'clock.

CHAPTER XI.

A DEMORALIZING PRACTICE.

Lysle Melrose had little conception of the extent to which he had injured the feelings of his ward. He knew that his proposition to kiss her had aroused her indignation, but he considered it nothing more than the fancy of a child who had been brought up in a very peculiar way. It gave him a momentary uneasiness, but he did not remember it long. The sound of Rosalie's voice, the next morning, after her return from her plunge in the breakers with Stanley, was joyous enough to convince him that there was nothing weighing very heavily on her heart. But she had received an impression that was not to be easily effaced. She had not been fond of Lysle before, and now she had a distinct aversion to him.

Stanley had told her, however, to do everything as his cousin directed, so far as was possible, and her life was in consequence soon filled with those "little

falsehoods" which she had only lately come to know. She made great progress in her reading, and Lysle took an hour or more each day to supplement the labors of the French governess in teaching that written language to mademoiselle. He talked to her invariably in French, and as there was no one else among his friends who used that tongue, it gave him much pleasure to return to it. English had come to seem, after six years in Paris, almost like a foreign speech.

As Stanley's time was so taken up with his city business, Lysle found the child a great deal with him. Stanley acceded gracefully to Lysle's proposition that the party make frequent changes in their stopping-places, so that he could try his hand on American inland pictures. Miss Steiner, Rosalie, and Lysle therefore wandered over a good deal of country during the warm season, and sometimes Stanley did not see them for a fortnight at a time.

Beside a few landscape scenes that he sketched, Lysle often drew the rustic people at their labors, and obtained in this way some very valuable ideas. He also made numerous drawings of his ward, who furnished the most beautiful natural poses, which he was glad to catch. Stanley was pleased with these sketches, and begged his cousin to finish one of them for him, that he might hang it in his library; but Lysle said he had made a rule that he could not vary from, even to oblige him, never to part with the smallest piece of his work.

"I shall paint much better some day," he explained, "and then I should be sorry to think that this amateurish stuff was floating around where it could be credited to me."

"I do not call it amateurish," responded Stanley,

kindly, though he was disappointed. "And as I should never have let it go out of my possession, your fame would not have been injured. But I do not wish you to change your plan, of course, for I think there is wisdom in it."

"Don't consider me ungenerous," continued Lysle, half disposed to relent. "I would give it to you more quickly than to any one else. Rosalie is a beautiful study. I shall try to get one of my pictures of her hung in the Salon next year."

Stanley wished he wouldn't, but he did not know how to give a reason for it, and had to hold his peace.

"I had a splendid study last winter, that would have given me a medal, at least. When it was just at the critical point, my model left me. It was most aggravating. You remember Arthur Peck, of course, who was at school with us at Brooks. It was his doing."

And then Lysle told him all about the trouble he had had with Arthur, and the result. Stanley grew much interested in the story.

"I have heard that you artists also draw from nude models," he said, when his cousin finished. "It seems to me that it must be a very demoralizing practice."

"In what way?"

"Why, to the women, in the first place. And to the students, afterwards."

The young artist smiled.

"It is so strange to me to hear such a thought," he said, "that I have to laugh a little. How could we make a copy of the human form if we had no models to draw by?"

"You could draw from other pictures," replied

Stanley. "There is no need of each new class of students having a living model."

Lysle laughed again.

"We should make poor work of it," said he. "There would be no new conceptions if we all had to follow an old one, having, perhaps, errors of its own."

"But I have heard," persisted Stanley, "that the old masters, as you call them, did better work than any of the artists of this day. Why could you not copy their nudes instead of originating from life? It must be demoralizing. There is no escape from that. Your models are not the best class of women, of course."

Lysle looked thoughtful.

"Not always, I am afraid," he replied, "though I am sure some of them are good enough. This Suzette I told you of was only an accidental model. She is a grisette, and glories in it."

Then he had to tell Stanley a great deal about the grisettes, and the lives they lead among their student friends.

"Nearly every student has his mistress, I suppose?" said Stanley, interrogatively.

"Very many of them, at least."

"Art students, and all?"

"Oh, it is just the same."

Stanley shook his head, as if the thoughts that this state of affairs suggested were two deep for words, and Lysle was glad of an opportunity to change his subject.

"Have you met any of the boys who used to be at Brooks?" he asked.

"Yes. Woodstock has an office here in town somewhere, and appears to be prospering. I have

heard that the old gentleman Peck has made a lot of money at last in electricity. The young fellow is a bad one, I guess."

"And Morgan, have you heard of him?"

"No."

"I have," said Lysle. "He has written to me several times. He is doing something in Buffalo. I have promised to go and see him before I leave the country."

If there was one thing more than another that Stanley wanted to know it was the date on which Lysle intended to "leave the country." It was the hardest question in the world to ask, however.

"You were always helping Morgan out of scrapes," he said. "I'll wager that he has asked you for money since he left school."

"Poor Dudley!" replied Lysle, suiting the expression of his face to the words. "He is such a good-hearted fellow, and life seems to be always so hard on him! I wish I could aid him to some good position. He has natural capabilities, but he never has been given a chance."

For a minute Stanley said nothing. He was revolving something in his mind.

"Do you think Morgan would like to be an attorney's clerk?" he asked, finally.

"He would be delighted!" exclaimed the other.

"And perhaps a lawyer, after awhile?"

"Ah, but who would try him?"

"I will," said Stanley, "if it will please you very much. He shall have a position in my office."

Lysle's breath was taken away for the moment. A kindness to his friend affected him much more than one to himself.

"Stanley, you are too good!" he said, with fervor.

Within a week the position had been offered to Morgan, and accepted. The poor fellow was trying to content himself in a dry-goods store at Buffalo, and thought a place in the office of a New York lawyer a wonderful stroke of luck. He was delighted to see Lysle again, and in response to the good advice which he gave him he returned the most absolute promises of faithfulness to his employer.

"I'll do everything he tells me," said Morgan. "I am determined to rise in the world, and I don't know a man in my list of acquaintances who is better able to point out the way than your cousin. How long do you stay here, Lysle?"

"Oh, I am going back to France in a month or so. But now I have learned the way, I shall come here oftener."

After this the tourists settled at Saratoga, where Miss Steiner thought the waters were of benefit to her. They did not stay at any of the large hotels, but at a private house in the residence quarter, which suited them all much better. Lysle worked hard on his pictures of Rosalie, and Miss Steiner got very little chance to talk to him on the subject nearest her heart. All of his spare time was devoted to the child, with whom he took long walks and rides, flattering himself that he was pleasing her in this way as well as Stanley would have done. Her dignity and demureness seldom left her, and he gradually fell into her serious way of conversation. She interested him immensely, and he wished he could think of some reasonable plan by which she could be taken to Paris or its environs, where he could see her often. A mere suggestion of this idea, however,

to Miss Steiner, showed him that in this case, at least, he would find both she and Stanley arrayed against him.

"Paris is a beautiful city," she admitted, "but it is also very wicked. Ah, how wicked it is! I can think of no place so bad to take a young girl to."

He felt a sense of personal injury at this assault on his beloved home, and replied that he did not know that Paris was any worse than other places, New York for instance.

"The French are not as hypocritical as the English and Americans," he told her, "but they may be as good, for all that. In this country everything is hidden; there it is allowed to see the light of day. A young person is guarded very carefully in France."

"Oh, I know all about it," she answered. "I have lived there."

He did not pursue the subject any farther. He was by no means sure that it would be wise to take Rosalie at that time across the sea, and he had consulted nothing but his desires in advancing the proposition.

A conversation that Miss Steiner had had with Stanley, the last time he came to Saratoga, still rang in that lady's mind, and would have added to her distrust of Paris had she not already been sufficiently prejudiced. He had told her of Arthur Peck's contemptible conduct in relation to the painting, making it a text for a general disquisition on the immorality of student life in the gay capital.

"I hope our dear Lysle has escaped the contagion that is around him," he said, with a serious mien. "He seems so good that I cannot imagine him anything else, but it must be a place full of sore temptation to the young who have not fixed principles.

However, as his heart is so set on that particular piece of work, I trust he will find the girl again. He says it is much the best thing he has attempted."

Miss Steiner, who never thought of the word "model" in any connection except with nudity, shook her head sadly. She had had great faith in Lysle's coming unscathed out of the fire of Parisian life, but from that time she was glad he was so soon going away from Rosalie. It would be better to risk the child to the tender mercies of Stanley's "methods" than to one who might be a profligate and a roué. Lysle noticed the difference in the way that she treated him, and wondered what he had done to deserve it.

He had a little farewell dinner with Dudley Morgan, whose gratitude knew no bounds. He paid a visit to Luke Woodstock, said good-bye to Mr. Dennin, and was then ready to bid his adieux to his own immediate circle at the St. Nicholas, to which the party had returned.

He had a long talk with Stanley, one of the last things he did, about Rosalie.

"I hope you are satisfied with her appearance, as regards health and intelligence," said Stanley. "You are equally her guardian with the rest of us, you know."

Lysle could not answer otherwise than in the affirmative.

"She is a beautiful girl," he said, "and remarkable in many respects. I know that Miss Steiner feels that you have robbed her of her childhood, by giving her the experiences of older people, but I can see that it has its advantages. She is learning to read French with wonderful rapidity. I do not believe she will be behind other children of her age

in the ordinary studies, when she is twelve, if you let her go on now. Her brain is so strong that she seems to have no mental wear. There is only one thing that I would suggest, and that is that she needs polishing a little, in view of the rough childhood she has had. She is a girl who will have to live with people of some fashion when she grows up, and it will not do to let her get so grounded in her natural ways that she can never outgrow them."

To this Stanley responded that he was most gratified to find that his cousin was so well pleased with the efforts he had made, and said that he should bear in mind his suggestions.

"I have seen so many puny children," he said, "that I wanted to give her a body, to begin with. It will not be as hard as you might imagine to 'polish' her, as you call it. When she grows older, she will be anxious to make a good impression, and the ordinary child is an imitative creature. Rosalie has all the best personal habits already, and she has also the virtues of obedience and politeness. There will be no trouble in making her fit for society, by the time she wants it. I shall do everything for the best, as I understand it, while you are away, but you will return before long, I hope."

Lysle answered that he could not tell when he should come to America again. He preferred the life of Europe to that of his native country. Perhaps, he said, Miss Steiner and Stanley would after awhile take a trip across the ocean with Rosalie. It would be a good thing for the child, and not a bad one for them.

"I hope we may do so," replied Stanley, thinking it the easiest way to agree with him, though he had no idea the thing proposed would soon come to pass

"There is one thing, though, that you have not done, that is in a sense your duty. You have not examined the investments that I have made of Rosalie's fortune."

Lysle laughed.

"I think I will risk them," he said. "You are reputed to be one of the best judges of values in New York, and I am certainly one of the poorest."

"Well," said Stanley, "they are open to you at any time. I think I have done pretty well for her. She is not spending half of her income. There will be a large sum by the time she is old enough to receive it."

They went in together to consult with Miss Steiner, and so well was everything managed by Stanley, who directed the conversation, that she appeared to have nothing at all to complain of. She felt herself crushed between these men, one of whom she disliked and the other of whom she had begun to distrust. Lysle advanced his proposition that his co-guardians should visit him the next time in Paris, saying that Stanley had given his partial assent, but Miss Steiner aroused herself for once and put in an imperative negative.

"I should never consent to take the child to that city," she said, with animation. "It is not the right place for a young girl."

"Pshaw!" responded Lysle, impatiently. "Paris is all right for a girl, if she is well guarded, and that is all you can say of any other place. But if you have a prejudice against the city of my adoption, why, go to Germany. I will come to Heidelberg to meet you—the town where you used to live."

At these words, Miss Steiner grew unaccountably white about the lips. Stanley, seeing that, for some

mysterious reason, she was as averse to this suggestion as to the other, and thinking it the part of wisdom to side with Lysle, warmly commended the plan.

"Rosalie could see her birthplace, then," he said, "and she would have the best of opportunities to fix her German accent. Heidelberg is the place, by all means. Her father is buried there, I believe?"

Miss Steiner responded to the latter question by a simple nod. Something was affecting her deeply.

"And her mother, also?" asked Lysle.

"No—that is, yes," replied Miss Steiner, much agitated.

Lysle began to be sorry that he had alluded to a subject that was evidently so painful.

"I crave your pardon," he said, in a low voice. "I did not mean to arouse sad memories. They were very dear to you, of course. I was thoughtless."

Stanley eyed the woman sharply. He thought her sudden shock very strange indeed.

"We must all die," he said, coldly, "but that is no reason why we should never visit a place where our friends breathed their last. If we come to Europe, Lysle, I shall certainly take Rosalie to see the graves of her parents. And it seems to me that I could be trusted to give her a view of Paris, also, if Miss Steiner does not wish to risk a personal visit to that dreadful city. Rosalie is not being brought up like other children. She will have sense enough to know good from evil when she is of an age to require it. I hate to think of a young person as one who has to be shut up in a cage for fear she will go astray. Rosalie ought to include travel in her education. I mean to find leisure enough to go with her, within a few

years. And if she should see Europe, she certainly must not miss Paris. Nor—nor Heidelberg, either," he added, pointedly, with his eyes full on the shrinking form of Miss Steiner.

After Lysle had gone, Miss Steiner found herself more under the control of the elder Melrose than she had ever been. He was free from the fear of any immediate combination between her and Lysle, and he did as he pleased in everything that related to Rosalie, without hardly asking her opinion. The child grew in stature and beauty, and her progress in her studies was simply marvellous. When she had acquired the art of reading French with reasonable fluency, he changed her governess for one who could also teach German, and she plunged into the books of that tongue. English she may almost be said to have learned to read by herself, as she frequently buried her little head in the volumes around her and studied out the things that she found there.

Stanley still took her on the longest walks, both winter and summer, and during the open season he sent her into the hills and to the beaches, where she imbibed the clear atmosphere and let the sun pour its virtues into her blood through the natural channels of the skin. He bought her a sturdy pony, of great endurance, upon which she rode many miles each day, often at break-neck speed, especially if he was with her. Stanley was a splendid rider himself, and the pair attracted general attention wherever they went, by the perfect ease with which they rode their beasts, and by their obliviousness to every one around them when engaged in this exercise. When they were far from town, in one of the secluded districts of the country, they were more like two companions of even age than guardian and ward. There

was no tree so tall that either of them could not climb it, no river so wide or so swift that they could not swim to the other side.

Galloping across the fields they "took" fences in a way that would have aroused the envy of an English fox hunter. Rosalie had a revolver when she was ten, and was able in a short time to hit a large copper cent at fifteen paces. The next year she had a small rifle, and she astonished a farmer near the hotel where she was spending part of the summer by bringing him the dead body of a large-sized hawk which had been playing sad havoc with his poultry.

Miss Steiner had become quite hopeless of the advent of that happy time when the process of making Rosalie into a "young lady" was to be begun. She followed Stanley and her ward on their trips, but she was of little account in their eyes. Her letters from Lysle were few and far between.

There was nothing to do but wait.

Even in the winter, when staying at the St. Nicholas, Stanley did not neglect the physical development of the young girl. He made her attend three times each week a gymnasium for ladies, where she developed a muscle that put her at the head of the entire class. She was very strong before, but the careful training of her teacher added greatly to her capacity for lifting weights and for using her arms and limbs in many ways. There is a familiar story of a woman who carried a calf up-stairs when it was very young, and continued to carry it each day until it became a full-sized ox. The effect of a gradual increase of work upon the muscular powers is undoubtedly great. Prepared by the whole course of her life for the extraordinary exertions she was called upon to make, Rosalie distanced all of her

rivals at the gymnasium, and became the pupil who was referred to whenever the remarkable possibilities of the school were to be talked of to applicants.

It must not be inferred that the child was on all occasions a "tomboy," however. She had a natural grace that never forsook her. Her manners in a hotel parlor, or at table, were perfect. She had never lived with inferior people, and had had no opportunity to learn their ways. The only thing that Miss Steiner objected to was her lack of those conventionalities which are lumped under the head of "style," in the lexicon of fashion. She would not consent that her hair should be touched with a curling iron, and she rejected the first pair of high-heeled boots offered her, on the ridiculous ground that they were uncomfortable. She picked out her own hats from the double standpoint of adaptability to her face and capacity to endure the weather, regardless of changing shapes. People always paused as she passed them to say, "What a beautiful girl!" but they often added—if they were women—"What a pity it is that some one does not show her how to dress!"

But Rosalie cared nothing for their opinion. She could ride better than any of them, walk her four miles an hour, and Stanley was satisfied with her. Miss Steiner did not count, and as for Lysle, she had almost forgotten him.

CHAPTER XII.

DRAWING FROM MLLE. SUZETTE.

One of the first things that Mr. Carlysle Melrose did, after he returned to Paris, was to make another effort to get the girl, Suzette, to sit as model for the picture he had been compelled to leave unfinished. He felt all the ardor of a student who has been on a vacation, and knew that he was exactly in the mood to do the best kind of work, if he could only get the materials. He would not go, himself, to the girl's rooms, as he did not like to risk encountering Arthur Peck there, but he sent one of his artist friends on the errand. The report he received was that Peck had gone to America on business, but had left the girl well provided for, and had conjured her, with his last words, not to allow Lysle to persuade her to go to his studio under any circumstances.

"He was most particular about it," she had said to the messenger, "and, had I not given him a positive promise, he would have insisted on taking me to America to make sure. He said I might go where I liked, do what I liked, and get what I liked, during his absence, so that I did not give a sitting to the American monsieur."

Lysle's friend asked her if she was so deeply in love with Peck that she could not be influenced by a large present of money.

"Oh, he is nothing at all to me, so far as love goes," she responded, shrugging her shoulders.

"But he has left me five hundred francs a month, and he says I shall always have as much. I had a real lover once—Monsieur Lysle knew him—whom I loved very dearly, but five hundred francs is not so bad. Besides, I should really be afraid of him if he came back and found I had disobeyed. He is not nice when he is angry. Ugh!"

The girl expressed in pantomime the appearance of Mr. Peck's features when he was out of temper, and the messenger, seeing that there was nothing more to be said, withdrew.

Lysle swallowed the disappointment as well as he could, but it was a bitter one. He went on with other work, and sent one of his studies of Rosalie to the Salon, where it brought him a medal. Frequent requests for the price of his works began to come to him, and the portrait of his ward especially seemed to strike the fancy of collectors. Some of those who wished to purchase could not understand his statement that he would not sell, and seemed to take it merely as a shrewd plan to put up the price.

"Oh, come, now, that is not reasonable," said one dealer, who had been told by a customer to buy the "Rosalie" at any price. "You have a right to ask a good sum for the canvas, but you ought to put a figure on it. I will give you ten thousand francs, and say no more about it."

The artist looked at the man contemptuously.

"It is the picture of a relation," he said. "I tell you that no sum you could name would buy it."

"A relation? Ah, that alters the case. I will give you—let me see—yes, fifteen thousand," replied the persistent dealer.

Lysle disdained to answer the proposition.

"I suppose you would like to get twenty-five

thousand," continued the man, who would have paid that sum gladly. "It is a great deal of money for a little thing like that. You are too high in your ideas. However—"

"Will you never understand?" exclaimed Lysle, becoming nettled. "I tell you it is not for sale. No, not if you offered a hundred thousand francs. I will not part with it!"

The dealer seemed to comprehend at last.

"Have you anything that you *will* sell?" he inquired, humbly.

"Nothing. Nothing whatever. I never have sold a picture and never shall."

Muttering his disappointment, the art dealer went his way. It was lucky for him, he thought, that all painters were not like M. Melrose. Most of them were glad enough to pocket the price of their work as soon as it could be got on the market. But he was an American, and that accounted for it. There was nothing like an American. Every one of them had an immense fortune and there was no need of their selling anything unless they chose.

Several letters were received from Stanley, breathing good wishes. One came from Miss Steiner, in quite a different vein from those that she used to send him. He knew that he had fallen from her good graces in some way, but could not guess how, and he did not care enough about the matter to let it trouble him. He had not increased his esteem for that lady on his recent trip. She seemed to him notional, and not as good a judge as Stanley of what was best for their ward. His estimate of the latter was increased to a great extent, several months after his return to Paris, by a letter, part of which ran in this wise:

"I have been able to do a service for you, which I am sure you will appreciate, and of which it gives me the greatest pleasure to inform you. In the course of my law business I have lately been brought in contact with Mr. Carlos Peck, the electrical inventor, whose son you know so well, or I ought to say, perhaps, so badly. I was placed in a position where he had to ask favors of me, and I made it the basis of a demand from his son Arthur, that he should write to the girl Suzette, bidding her go at once to your studio, and place herself under your orders. The father did not know the story, of course, but he understood that his son's consent to something that I asked was necessary to obtain what he wished. Arthur held back a long time, but finally said he would write to her, and he will do so, I am confident. So if she comes to you, you will know why, and hasten to take advantage of the opportunity."

To say that this delighted Lysle feebly expresses its effect. He wrote his cousin a warm letter of thanks for the pains he had taken, and awaited the coming of his model with anxiety. In a few days she knocked at his studio door, in a state of high excitement. She held in her hand two letters, one written to herself, in French, the other to Lysle, in English. She began at once to upbraid her absent lover, in a high key, but Lysle was too much occupied in reading the note addressed to him to understand her. This was Peck's English letter:

"Do not think, because I am compelled to send this girl to you, that I like you any better. You may thank your cousin Stanley for it, not me. I have agreed with him to help you in this matter, and I

have written Suzette a note that will, if I am not much mistaken, put her exactly in the mood for your purpose. Use your paints while the pretty anger is on, for I shall come back to Paris within a month and reclaim her. Write to Stanley that I have kept my word with him in full. If Suzette looks as I have seen her on certain occasions, you will make your everlasting fame by this one picture alone."

Lysle looked up after reading it and saw Suzette standing in a great rage, by his side, uttering with rapidity and venom the most frightful diatribes against the author.

"What does he mean, this dog?" she asked. "He writes that you will tell me. He intimates that some one has written to him that I have been unfaithful, I who have hardly been outside my door since he went away! Ah! what a beast it is! He wants to escape paying me my five hundred francs a month, and he is not honest enough to tell the simple truth!"

Thus she went on, and Lysle, too much an artist not to profit by the opportunity, as he had been advised, quietly placed his unfinished picture on his easel, and worked away on it, with bounding pulses, pausing only to interject a word now and then to keep her at the fever heat which she had assumed at the beginning. She had the very expression of face that he wanted, and he made rapid progress. Deeming it wise not to let her suspect what he was doing, as she had on the previous occasion, he kept the picture with its back to her, and at the end put it aside and began to express sympathy.

"I will look into that matter," said he, "and see whether there is not some way that you can compel him to send you the money. The American laws are

not the same as those of France. If you will call here again, say the day after to-morrow, I will try to tell you all about it."

She thought he was very kind, and by-and-by she calmed down enough to promise what he wished. He felt heartily ashamed when she was gone, at the deception he had practiced for the second time, and also at having become, in a certain sense, a partner of Peck, whom he thoroughly disliked and despised. He read the latter's note over again, and smiled scornfully. Then he turned back to his picture, and found compensation for everything in the progress he had made.

The painting was in a critical stage, but three or four more such "posings" as he had had to-day would complete it. Surely it would be a great work when it was done, and worthy to take a place with anything of the contemporaneous school. He sat there for hours absorbed in the delighted contemplation, and went out upon the street at last with a light heart and a quick step, to join his companions in one of the restaurants for dinner.

As he drew near to the place, he met the girl Clothilde, who had served for a short time as a model at M. Jouanneau's, mention of which was made in a preceding chapter. The suffering of the child—for so he called her—during the nude seances, seemed not to decrease with any number of them, and his sympathies were aroused when he found her each night shedding bitter tears, in spite of the harsh injunctions of her mother not to make a dunce of herself. One day, when she came alone, she had confided to him that the woman was only her step-mother, and that since they had been prospered financially, she had done little beside drink, taking

all the money that the girl brought home and hardly allowing her enough to buy necessary food and clothing.

"Oh, monsieur," she cried, in heartfelt anguish, "if you knew how distasteful this profession is to me! I think some day, when I have to come here, I shall throw myself into the Seine! If there were anything else that I could do, even though the pay was very little!"

This made a deep impression upon Lysle, and when, a few days later, Clothilde told him that her step-mother had been sent to prison for theft, he exerted himself, through some friends, and secured a position for the girl in the Magazin du Louvre. For awhile he saw her quite frequently, but after that, as there seemed no need of his assistance, Clothilde forebore to visit his studio except upon some holiday or similar special occasion.

"I hate to say anything to you," said the girl, in a low tone. "for I have already made you too much trouble."

"Not at all," he replied. "I have told you to come to me always when there is any way in which I can help you. What has happened?"

"Well, it is all because of Madame Jouet. She happened in at the store one day, and saw me behind the counter; and that night she waited for me and followed me home. She does nothing now but steal, and she told me that I had the best chance in the world to make a good deal of money by taking things from the magazin, and letting her sell them. She annoyed me so much that I changed my room, but she came straight to the magazin and found me, so that did no good. When I refused to have anything more to do with her, she told all the girls who

were on my counter that I was her daughter, and that I had been an artist's model; and from that time I have had no end of trouble. She came in often, and the managers said I must stop it. I tried to explain it to them, but they would not listen, and finally they gave me my discharge."

The young artist was very sorry for the girl, and he gave her some money on the spot, agreeing to call at her room the next day and have a long talk about what it was best to do. She had the greatest faith in him, as well as a complete reliance upon his judgment, and she accepted the silver and left him with a *merci*. He studied her case a good deal that evening, and tried to think where he might find another situation for her, but none presented itself to his mind. He felt that he was in a measure responsible for her, as she had left her profession of model on his advice, and had looked to him so long as a protector.

He ate dinner with his friends, quite preoccupied with these thoughts, and the next day he went to see her, as he had promised. The result of their conference was a decision that she should leave her name at several agencies for the employment of house servants, and await the result.

"You must come to me for money whenever you need it," he said, "until you are employed again."

He was so wrapped up in his great painting that he could hardly think of anything else till that was completed. Many hours each day he stood over it, measuring its lines with his eyes and instruments, calculating the effect of a bit more color here and a trifle deeper shading there. Suzette came to learn what he had found about the American laws which govern the relations of young men and their sweet-

hearts, and by saying what he chose he obtained the emotion on her countenance that he needed. Before the painting was completed he had worked her into such a frenzy about Arthur Peck that she would probably have tried to kill him had he chanced to enter the studio.

But at last it was finished. The necessity for deception was ended. And then he told her that he had learned that her lover had tired of his own accord of his absence, and was about to return to the arms he loved best on earth.

Peck was bound to keep to the literal agreement he had made with Stanley, but he did not intend to exceed it by the breadth of a hair. Lysle had completed his picture just in time. Suzette called within a few days to show a letter that she had received, announcing that he would be in Paris immediately, and that he should fly to her side with all speed. He had tried living without her, he wrote, and could not endure it, with much more to the same ingenious effect. The mercurial girl, as delighted as she had been indignant, danced about the studio.

"I did not think you cared so much for him," Lysle told her, as she executed a *pas seul* that would have done credit to one of the dancers in the Mabille.

"For *him!*" she screamed. "For *him!* For his five hundred francs, you mean! I like to ride in the Bois, in a fine carriage, and to dine in the great restaurants on the boulevards. For *him* I care as much as for this shoe; he keeps my feet from touching the dirt, that's all!"

He could not help being sorry for her, for he knew she had once had better ideals.

"Did you ever hear from André?" he asked, gently.

She sobered very suddenly.

"Yes, once, by a newspaper. He is married to the daughter of a rich man near Lyons. It was all right. He did all he agreed to for me. I knew he would have to go. But, *mon dieu*, how I loved him!"

It was quite awhile before Clothilde found any situation that she thought she could fill, where the advertisers were of the same opinion with her on that point. She came to tell Lysle one day that she had a place in the Rue Marbeuf.

"It is a queer menage," she told him. "The man is an American, and the woman—of course she is not his wife—is a French girl who would pass for a grisette were it not for her good clothes. I have the rooms to keep in order, and their affairs are nothing to me. I should not speak of them to any one but you. The gentleman has just returned from a visit to America, and they have nice quarrels sometimes. He has tried already to kiss me, but madame has her eyes on him. I do not like the way he acts, but I must bear it, I suppose. I could not depend forever on your bounty, and really, there is no danger."

Lysle had been staring at her in a startled way. He instantly suspected who this American was.

"What is his name?" he inquired.

"It is an odd name," said she. "Something like Villamsen."

"Williamson?"

"Yes, that is it."

He felt convinced that the name was assumed. He rose abruptly and went to get his new painting. Placing it on an easel, he called Clothilde.

"I am going to show you something I have just finished. You are not to talk about it, for it is a secret yet. What do you think of that?"

It was now Clothilde's turn to start.

"It is she!" she gasped.

"She? Who?"

"Madame Villemsen! The lady I am working for!"

"What makes you think that?"

The girl rubbed her eyes.

"I am sure! Where did you get it?"

"I made it myself."

"You made it! She has been here?"

"Well, yes," he admitted, laughing at her earnestness.

The startled look did not leave her face.

"Then it was you that they were talking about last night," she went on. "He spoke about her having been to see some artist, and insinuated that she had fallen in love with him. This she denied, and their words got very high. Then he told her that she did not look pretty when she was in a rage, and that the artist had made a copy of her face in a passion and was going to exhibit it in the great gallery at the Palais de l' Industrie. I heard him say it was the second time the same artist had fooled her. He seemed to take great delight in making her angry. They were three hours quarreling before they fell asleep. But it is not my affair. She is to give me twelve francs a week and everything found."

Lysle had food for a good deal of thought in these things. He cautioned Clothilde not to mention in any way that she knew him, and for the next

month he exercised more care than usual in his movements.

One day Clothilde came to him with a serious story. Monsieur Williamson had persecuted her with his unwelcome attentions until she could bear it no longer. That morning, while madame was out on the street shopping, he had attempted to embrace her, and she had had a desperate struggle with him. She did not dare continue in the situation, and yet she dreaded placing herself again under the bounty of M. Lysle. It seemed that Peck had recognized her as the original of a painting that M. Jouanneau had placed on exhibition, no other, in fact, than the sleeping beauty on the sands, and brutally told her that squeamishness was wholly out of place in a model who had posed in that position.

"That dreadful picture will keep me from ever getting a respectable place in Paris," she said, tearfully. "No one will believe I am in earnest in wishing to lead a good life."

"Asses!" was his angry comment. "I do not see but one thing for you to do, then. You will have to overcome your scruples and take up your old profession."

"Impossible!" she cried. "Besides, I am older now, and it would be more disagreeable than ever. I would rather starve!"

He relapsed into deep thought for several moments.

"I am going to paint a new picture, myself," he said, when he raised his eyes. "You would not mind sitting to me."

"Nude?"

"Certainly."

"I would rather sit to any other man in Paris."

His astonishment was written in his eyes.

"What do you mean?"

She did not answer, and the expression of her face troubled him a good deal. He was sorry he had made the suggestion. After a little while he told her that she would have to apply once more at the agencies and come to him once a week for money, as she used, until she found something to do.

"I can never come to you for money again," she replied, her voice trembling. "You have offered me a chance to earn it and I have refused. I know you think me silly, if not ungrateful. I will do the best I can, but I shall not come back to you."

He rose, and walking to where she sat, put his hand in a paternal fashion on her head.

"My little girl is disposed to be naughty," he said. "She ought to know that it will give me the greatest pleasure to assist her, and that it would distress me beyond measure to think that she kept any of her troubles from me. I am guardian for another girl, too, did you know that? A little American who may be coming here by-and-by, and whom I would like to have know you. They tell me in America that Parisians are wicked, but I know of one with whom I would trust my little Rosalie."

She caught eagerly at the idea.

"Send for her," she said, "and let me be her servant. I will wait on her faithfully. And could you not"—she glanced around his rooms—"could you not let me stay here somewhere till she comes? I could take care of your clothes, and keep your rooms in order, and cook your coffee in the morning. I should not need any wages, hardly, and I would eat very little. Oh, M. Lysle, try me! You would never be sorry."

The idea did not commend itself favorably to him, but she pleaded so hard that he said at last he would ask the concierge whether she did not require an assistant.

The woman, who knew the easy road to Lysle's pocket-book, which was frequently opened for her on numerous pretences, smiled wisely when he told her the story, and said she could accommodate mademoiselle, if it was any object to monsieur.

"You will only have to give her food and a bed," said he, never dreaming what was in the woman's mind. "I will furnish the ten francs a week that you will agree to pay her. She is an honest girl, I am sure, and will do everything you tell her."

The concierge courtesied. She had her own notions about the matter, but she thought it wiser to please monsieur. She knew a girl could save her a good many steps, and it would be a cheap way to get an assistant. If monsieur had other ideas, what was it to her? She had always found him generous, and she had no fear but he would continue to be so.

Clothilde brought her small belongings the next day, and installed herself in the hotel where Lysle now had both his studio and living apartments. She did the work required of her, and was quite happy. Sometimes she gave a sitting to her benefactor, that he might sketch her face, which he found more worthy of his pencil than he had originally thought. When she had nothing else to do she liked nothing better than to curl up on a sofa in his studio, and watch him at work, hours and hours together.

CHAPTER XIII.

"OH, IS THAT RELIGION?"

Thirteen years old! Yes, Miss Rosalie had reached that important mile-post in the life of a young person.

Miss Steiner had been chafing more than ever of late at her total lack of ability to influence the education of the child. Stanley Melrose had become more and more arbitrary as the years rolled away.

To be sure, he had thus far treated her always with external politeness. To be sure, Rosalie had never given her a word that could be considered in itself objectionable. But Stanley managed as he pleased, and the girl was a valiant ally to him in everything.

At thirteen Rosalie had a figure that would have enabled her to pass for fifteen at least. She was quite tall and well developed enough for the latter age, as straight as an arrow, well poised, with rounded limbs, on which no superfluous flesh could be found. She had grown handsomer each year, though her sunburned beauty might have caused a Fifth avenue belle to shrug her shoulders at the appellation. The rich, healthful blood that coursed through her veins could be seen in the glorious color that mantled her cheek, and her eyes were as bright as gems of the first water.

In her studies she had made the most rapid progress. She could now read fluently in each of the three languages that she had acquired, and could

converse to a considerable extent in Spanish and Italian also. She had devoured the ordinary "English branches" in a quarter of the time usually taken for that purpose. It was not necessary to drill her after the parrot method. When she had read anything once, she knew it as well as though she had been over it a dozen times. History she absorbed as a plant does water. She learned geography and astronomy, physiology and philosophy with a facility that astounded her teachers.

Stanley was very proud of her, and proud also of his "method," which he believed was largely entitled to the credit of all this success.

Miss Steiner had the nominal charge of Rosalie's wardrobe, though the girl wore nothing but what Stanley approved of. He did not believe in the healthfulness of the "knee-skirts" that young girls usually use, and for a long time Rosalie had had dresses that reached very nearly to the tops of her boots. He would have liked to dress her on a wholly reformed model, as he despised the entire fabric of feminine attire, but he did not like to attract as much attention to her as this would have done, in a city like New York. As she was compelled to wear dresses, and as fashion gave her thin stockings, he had insisted that her skirts should be long enough to ensure warmth for the lower limbs, believing that the extremities were in as much need of protection, at least, as the parts of the human frame nearer the heart. But when he returned, on her thirteenth birthday, from a trip of two weeks into another part of the country—where his law business had called him—he found her arrayed in new garments, three or four inches longer than the old ones.

As an artist can entirely alter a picture by one

mark of his pencil, so Miss Steiner had made another creature of Rosalie by this slight addition to the length of her skirts.

Stanley did not like it. He thought such a pronounced change ought not to have been made without a formal consultation with him. But this was not his strongest feeling, as he gazed on the transformation. He knew in a moment that the child had gone, and forever. It was a young woman who stood before him—and he had an almost irresistible inclination to address her as "Miss."

Rosalie comprehended a little of what was passing in his mind, and waited shyly before saying much to him. The change had been rather agreeable to her, as it seemed to give her a new importance—to make her a person of more consequence. She had stood before the mirror longer on the day she first donned those clothes than in any previous week of her life. She was not looking at her face, either, but at her form, heightened, it seemed, by the change in her dress. The first doubt she had felt about the matter was when she saw the odd look in Stanley's countenance.

"You don't like it," she said, softly, as soon as she could speak to him alone. "I will put these dresses away and get my others out."

"I—I am not sure whether I like it or not," he answered, slowly. "It is a great change and my eyes have not had time to get used to it. It seems to please you, though," he added.

"Not unless it does you," was the immediate reply.

"We will let it go for the present, and that will give us time to decide," he said. "Whose idea was it, Miss Steiner's or yours?"

"Her's. I had to have some new clothes, and she said to the dressmaker: 'Don't you think they ought to be a little longer, now that she is so nearly thirteen?' And the dressmaker agreed with her. And I did not see any harm in it."

He had known that she would be a woman some day, if she lived. He had thought of it very, very often. But he had not foreseen that she might lose her childhood in one moment, as she seemed to have done. He had anticipated a very slow and gradual change that would be presaged for a long time, like the rising of the sun. He had never thought that she could bound into womanhood like this, without the least warning!

"And so you are thirteen?" he said, musingly.

"Yes—to-day."

It was a stupendous fact, and it staggered him. For a minute he was afraid of her. Yesterday, before those dresses were let down, he could have taken her on his knee.

"What shall I get you for your birthday?" he inquired, constrainedly.

"I do not wish for anything, Stanley, unless it be some little keepsake. It is enough to have you home again."

How strangely this sounded, from that young lady! It would have come naturally enough from the little Rosalie he had left two weeks ago; but from this one with the long skirts! It was not at all the same.

She knew that the change had separated him from her by a great distance, and it sobered her much to realize it. There was no one in the world for her like Stanley. She had been very lonely while he was away.

Stanley tore himself from her as soon as he could, and went to his own room. He was half inclined to be angry at the woman who was the cause of the change.

He could think of nothing but this: Rosalie was a child yesterday, and she could never be one again!

That night he cut their usual walk much shorter than common. The girl noticed it, and it hurt her. She felt as she might if she had committed some fault that entitled her to his just displeasure. It was the dress—the miserable long skirts—that she had thought so nice that morning, as she stood, like a little peacock, in front of her mirror! How she hated them!

"Let me change back to the other dresses, Stanley," she said, as they walked slowly down Broadway, after five minutes in which neither of them had spoken.

He started.

"What put that into your head?" he asked.

"I know you do not like the new ones. I do not like them myself. I would much rather change back. The dressmaker can put in another hem, so they will be the same length as the old."

There was a very strong element of entreaty in her tones, something he had tried to teach her never to indulge in.

"Rosalie," he said, and stopped. It seemed as if he should have addressed her as "Miss Vandenhoff."

She looked up at him.

"I have been thinking about it and have come to the conclusion that Miss Steiner and the dressmaker were right. You—you are thirteen."

She bore an expression which plainly meant, "I am very sorry, and I hope you will try to forgive me." But she waited for him to go on.

"You are—thirteen," he repeated, drawing a long breath. "According to the usages of fashion you would have had to do it soon, any way. It is of no use to go back to the old style now."

She was too distressed to reply.

"I knew—of course I knew," he went on, "that you would be a young lady sometime, but I was not prepared for it so suddenly. It—it is all right. Even if you went back now, you would only have it to do over again later."

She realized that this was true, and she heartily wished that it were not. She would have preferred to be a child all her life, so long as it was evident that Stanley would be better pleased that way. Still, she was not ready to adopt the title he had just given her.

"I do not think I am exactly a 'young lady,' yet," she said. "I am sure I feel just the same as I did yesterday, when I was only twelve."

He stole a glance at her, and was again impressed by the maturity that her new garments had given her.

"Yes, you are a young lady," he replied. "You are no longer a little girl, and there is nothing in between. You are certainly a young lady."

She looked up at him again, with a shy glance—a shyness, he thought, bitterly, that had come to her with those cursed clothes.

"I do not want to be a young lady, if I can help it," said Rosalie, as they walked along. "It seems so dignified. I shall always want to romp and run, and ride horses, and jump fences."

"Shall you?" he said, much gratified. It was like a little of the lost child coming back to him.

"Yes," she cried, gayly. "And we shall go into the country, just the same, shall we not? And we will go to the beaches and swim out in the breakers, and you have promised me, as soon as I can shoot well enough, to take me into the Adirondacks, on a deer hunt!"

He looked askance at the skirts again.

"You could not get through the woods with those things dragging around you," he said. "They would catch on every bush we passed."

"I would take them off," she responded, quickly "When we are in the woods we will not care for looks. I will put on my old ones, then—or a boy's suit! Oh, a boy's suit—that would be lovely!"

He let her delight at the prospect warm him into equal pleasure for a moment, but the new condition of things came back.

"I am not sure that I could go hunting with you at all, now," he said, dejectedly. "Your being thirteen will make many differences."

She comprehended a little of his meaning, and the least trace of a blush came into her face, the first one of her life.

"We can bathe, at least," she said, not willing to let go of everything at once. "Everybody bathes, no matter how old they are. And we can ride horseback, and take long walks."

"Y-e-s," he answered. But he was not quite sure of it. He was not sure that he would have any right ever to be alone with her after this.

He determined to sound Miss Steiner on the question, and the next day, when Rosalie was at her studies, he called on that lady. He had not a very

high idea of her opinion on most things, but he thought she might reasonably be supposed to know something about the one that just now interested him so much. He said to himself before he went that he should do as he pleased after the conference, but still he wanted to hear what she had to say.

"I notice that you have considerably lengthened Miss Rosalie's dresses," said he, by way of beginning.

He had never spoken of the girl to her with that title before, and she noticed it with a sort of gratification. He had tried not to do it, but he had to make some concessions to her new appearance.

"She has grown so much in the last year that I thought it necessary," replied Miss Steiner. "Do you think they are too long?"

"No, I do not know that they are," he responded, thoughtfully. "Other girls of her age wear them the same length, I suppose. She—she is thirteen."

They seemed to be getting along so well that Miss Steiner was much encouraged.

"Yes," she assented, "and while it is true she is only thirteen, she has the height and the weight of many girls of fifteen. I have felt for a long time that her skirts should be longer."

"She *has* a fine physical development," he said. 'You know I take some credit for the treatment to which her frame has been subjected."

She did not like to admit too much.

"Her father was a large man. It is natural that she should take after him in that respect."

He did not fancy the word "large" applied to Rosalie.

"She will not be very 'large,' I think," said he. "She will be tall—yes, taller than the average; but she will never be stout. She has very firm flesh, but she is not inclined to adiposity. And so her father was a large man?" he added, finding that an interesting theme. He had never heard much about Vandenhoff.

"He was larger than most men," said Miss Steiner, showing instantly that she wished to avoid further reference to the subject. But he persisted.

"And her mother—was she large, also?"

"No—not very—that is, she was about the usual height," responded Miss Steiner, in undoubted confusion.

He had often noticed that she never alluded to Rosalie's mother without exhibiting trepidation, and with his legal bent of mind he had tried many times to assign a reason, but could not.

"You have no picture of Mr. Vandenhoff, I believe?" he said.

"No, nothing at all."

"Nor of her?"

Again he marked the uneasiness with which she met the question.

"Nothing," she answered, huskily.

He mused a moment and then remarked how strange it was, in this age, that a gentleman and his wife should have left no portraits whatever behind them.

"Did they never have any taken?" he asked.

"Yes," she stammered. "There were several—but—they were all destroyed. A—a fire—broke out and everything was lost."

He eyed her narrowly, with the gaze of a lawyer who knows what it is to cross-question a shrinking witness.

"A fire?" he repeated. "I had never heard of that."

"It was a long time ago," she said, breathing heavily.

"Was—was anything else lost in that fire?" he asked, leaning forward.

She lifted her eyes to his, and her face was very white.

"What do you mean?" she asked, hardly above a whisper.

"Were the pictures all that was burned?"

The question was innocent enough, and there seemed no hidden meaning behind it, but she trembled visibly.

"Everything was destroyed—everything in the house," she responded.

A thought struck him and he put it into words.

"Was any one hurt?"

She shrank as if he had struck her, but answered instantly:

"No one."

There was evidently something about the occurrence that distressed her greatly, but there seemed no need of prolonging her agony, merely for his entertainment, and Stanley changed the subject back to its original form.

"Miss Rosalie is a very intelligent girl," he said.

Miss Steiner assented.

"She is as far advanced in her studies, I think, as most girls of—of thirteen."

"Oh, yes."

"Is there—is there anything you would suggest

that she should be taught, more than she is already studying?"

It was so marvelous that he should propound such a query as this to her, after all these years in which he had ignored her suggestions, that Miss Steiner paused to recover her breath.

"There is only one thing that I deem important," she said, after a little. "I cannot help feeling that a young girl needs religious training."

"How much?" he asked, in a business like tone. "And how would you suggest it ought to be given?"

"Rosalie has had none at all, you know," she said, and it sounded like an accusation against him.

"She says her prayers every night."

"Yes, but—you will excuse me for saying it—she knows that you do not think the act of very great importance."

"I never told her so," said he. "On the contrary, when she has spoken to me about it, on several occasions, I have said it was a very good thing for her to do."

Miss Steiner thought she would never have a better chance than this to free her mind on this point.

"I know you told her that," said she. "But you also told her that *you* never did it. And that has had its effect."

"What could I do?" he asked, testily. "Should I have lied to her?"

"No," she answered, soberly. "You should have said them, and then you could have told her the truth."

He did not wish to get into a discussion about the

needs of his own soul, and he remained silent under this thrust.

"I think that a girl, as I have told you before, Mr Melrose," continued Miss Steiner, "should be under the care of conscientious Christian teachers. She will have temptations enough when she becomes a woman to require all the faith in God that she can imbibe."

"It's cant, most of it!" he exclaimed, warmly. "I know a lot of these church people in a business way, and I would not trust one of them if my back was turned. I have tried to have her grow up with common sense in her head, and I think she has it. A certain amount of religion may be good for a girl—I am not going to say it isn't—but I don't think it necessary to pour it into her by the cartload, until it is the only thing she knows."

Miss Steiner listened with gratification, for he had at least shown a willingness to debate the subject, a thing he had never done before.

"You are taking a great responsibility," she said, impressively. "If anything should ever go wrong with Rosalie, you would be alone to blame."

He fidgeted in his chair. It was now he who had been made uncomfortable.

"How am I any more responsible for her than you?"

"What is the use of trying to deceive yourself? Rosalie listens to everything you tell her as to a god. She thinks that whatever you believe *must* be right. Do you know what she is to-day, speaking from a religious standpoint? She is a skeptic!"

Miss Steiner spoke the word as if it described some terrible disease, the very touch of which would

poison the unhappy person on whom it fastened itself.

"I don't see why you saddle this all off on to me," he said, as if the evil had already come to pass and he was trying to evade his share of it. "You have had the charge of her as long as I have—much longer, in fact. I have never forbidden her to read religious books or to hear sermons. I didn't think they were good for her, and I don't now, for that matter—but I am willing to make a partial concession if you really think it important."

He heard the girl coming from her school-room, and broke off the discussion to go to meet her. She hastened her steps as she saw him coming, and upon his invitation gladly accompanied him to his library.

"What do you know about religion, Rosalie?" he asked her, when they were seated. It appeared to him that a direct way was always better than circumlocution.

"Nothing," she answered with a surprised look.

"You must know something about it," he replied, with slight impatience. "You know, of course, who made the world?"

Her face brightened at that.

"Oh, is that religion?" she asked. "I know. It was God."

"And you know that he made you also?" said Stanley.

"Did he?" she asked, with greater interest. "No, Stanley, I did not know that."

He felt that they were getting into deep water and he tried to steer the subject nearer to the shore.

"Why, certainly," he said, with an air of wisdom. "God made everything."

She accepted the statement, because it came from

him, and was prepared thenceforth to defend it against all comers.

"You pray every night, do you not?" he asked her next.

"Yes, I pray to God and to Jesus. I was taught to do so by my German governess. Who is Jesus, Stanley?"

He began to wish that he had left this matter to some one else.

"Why, Jesus—" He paused for half a minute in a vain hope that something appropriate would occur to him, and then gave it up.

"I have got to run down to my office," he said, taking out his watch, and looking at its face abstractedly. "Send your French governess here. She is a Protestant, I suppose?"

Rosalie answered, abashed at her own ignorance, that she did not know. The girl had no more idea what a Protestant was than a Hindoo would have had.

She went to find her, and when the woman came, Stanley signed to Rosalie to withdraw.

"You are a Protestant, are you not?" was his first question to the governess.

"Oh, yes, sir!" replied the maid, quite in a flutter at the thought that he should have imagined her anything else.

"Then you know all about God, of course?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" came the reply, in the same tone.

"And Jesus—you know all about him, too?"

"Everything, sir."

He paused.

"I want you to teach Miss Rosalie all about them. She is thirteen now, and it is time that she had some religious instruction. You feel quite competent, do

you?" he asked, looking the Frenchwoman full in the face.

"Indeed I do, sir," was her confident reply.

"All right. It will add, say half an hour a day, to your duties. I shall of course allow you extra compensation for it. How much, should you say? It is better to have these things agreed on in advance."

The woman paused to sum up mentally.

"Would two dollars a week be too much?" she asked, after making the calculation.

"No," he replied, at once, and she was immediately stricken with grief that she had not asked three.

"Shall I tell her about Jonah, too?" she asked, rising.

"And the whale?" he asked, proud of having found a theme at last that he was familiar with. "Well, no, not at first. It is not necessary, is it?"

"Not absolutely," she responded. "And what about the Hebrew children?"

She was going beyond his knowledge of Scripture again.

"Let—me—see," he said, absently. "What did they do?"

"They were put in a fiery furnace, you remember."

"Oh, yes!" he exclaimed, though he did not remember at all. "No, I think I would let those things go until later. You—you can consult me from time to time."

"I shall need a new Bible," said the governess.

"Certainly," he responded, handing her a five-dollar bill. "You can get one for that, can't you?"

She responded that she could, and departed to

purchase one for a dollar, putting the change in her pocket, like the honest girl she was.

Stanley forgot all about his errand at his office, but sat there in his room until dinner was ready, amazed at the changes that had come in such a brief time.

"Everything will have to be different," he said, dolefully, as the result of his long deliberations. "She is certainly thirteen. I never realized before what an unlucky number that is!"

CHAPTER XIV.

LYSLE COMES HOME AGAIN.

Lysle Melrose had been away nearly five years, and it was nothing surprising that he wrote to his co-guardians that they might expect a visit from him at any time now. He was twenty-six and had made a reputation with his brush that most artists would envy at fifty. His work had attracted attention all over Europe, and it was admitted by some of the best judges that he had certainly founded a new school. Lysle was not in the least affected by all the praise that was showered on him, though he knew as well as the critics that he had accomplished a great success. He had nothing to sell, and consequently cared little for the opinion of that class who distinguished themselves mostly as buyers; but it was gratifying to him, after all, in a certain sense, that agents of millionaires came often to his studio and tried to induce him to part with something he had done,

be it ever so insignificant, at whatever price he chose to set.

He was still the slender, poetic-faced boy of old Time did not seem to have anything to do with him. When he was pointed out in a company of artists as "Melrose, the great painter," there always came the astonished exclamation, "What, that lad!" He had gone his way, painting when he had the inspiration, strolling on the boulevards when he did not feel like work, and dining with that company of bohemians and bohemiennes with whose morality he had so little in common, exactly as he did when he first came to Paris, unknown and without a friend in the city.

Neither of his cousins knew on what steamer he would arrive, and thus it happened that he reached the hotel during that part of the day when Stanley was absent at his business, and had his first interview with Miss Steiner. This was quite satisfactory to him, and he felt a curiosity to hear what she had to say after the long interim in which she had written him so little.

He found her much older, aged far beyond what the lapse of years would have induced him to expect. Stanley, who had seen her every day, had not noticed what struck Lysle. She received him with a quiet dignity, more constrained, he thought, if anything, than her manner the last time he saw her. He could account for it now no more than then, and dismissed the subject with the thought that it must be due to physical ailments, of which he could not know and about which he must not inquire.

"And where is our little ward?" he asked, when the ordinary greetings had been exchanged and the usual inquiries made and answered.

"She is out with her governess," was the reply. "I think they are making some purchases in the way of clothing."

She spoke oddly, he thought; just as if they had secrets that she could only guess at, and which might not be at all what she imagined.

'You surely select her clothing," he said.

"No," she answered, despondently. "I select nothing. I am of no more account in her life than I was the last time you were here."

He felt that this was an injustice, and wanted her to know that he thought so.

"I can see no reason for this state of things," he said. "You have only to assert your rights to gain them. Stanley is a man of great wisdom, it seems to me, in many things, but the dressing of a girl ought to come naturally to you. I do not understand why you leave it to a governess to select her things."

She shook her head plaintively.

"I have let it go too long, Lysle—I beg your pardon—I should have said Mr. Melrose."

"I would much rather you called me Lysle," he remarked. "You can save the more formal title for my cousin."

"Very well," she continued. "When I first came in contact with Mr. Melrose—with Mr. Stanley—I was suffering from a great grief and a great shock. He had a will stronger than mine and from the first I yielded to every suggestion that he made. Now I cannot reassert my rights. What I am most alarmed about is that I do not feel the necessity of doing so—much as I know I ought. I am in a position of a person who has been hypnotized."

He smiled in spite of himself at this, for he had

heard a good deal of mesmerism in France and considered it a very silly delusion.

"I asked you to write to me whenever you thought there was anything that I could do," he said, politely. "As you did not call on me, I supposed, naturally, that everything was going on to your satisfaction."

It was a sort of question, although not put in the interrogative form, and she attempted to answer it.

"There was nothing that you could do, that I know of. When you were last here, you seemed to side with him in everything."

There was an implied accusation here that he did not relish.

"In anything that was wrong, do you mean?" he asked, his brow darkening.

"Oh, I mean nothing special. But it is not the best thing for Rosalie that Stanley—that any one, indeed—should have her so completely under his influence. You have not noticed it as I have. Watch her and you will see. If he told her that the sun rose in the west she would accept it against the evidence of her eyes."

Lysle thought, as he had five years before, that the woman was unreasonable.

"But *does* he tell her that?" he asked, pointedly. "Does he not, on the contrary, tell her that it rises in the east, and show her how its rising and setting are governed? It is not enough to accuse him of influencing the child—you must show that his influence is pernicious."

Miss Steiner's face grew longer than before.

"Rosalie is thirteen now," she said, "and it is time that her training was given to some woman of judgment. You ought to see that the period when a girl

is just budding into womanhood is not the one when she should find her only confidant a man."

She had managed to say it, though it came hard. She wanted to see if there was any aid for her in this third party to the guardianship.

Lysle did not know what to say to this. He had a sensation that she was theoretically right, but he had, on the other hand, a very high opinion of Stanley, and he did not like to assume the attitude of taking sides between them.

"I must repeat," he said, after a pause, "that you seem to me to have been derelict in permitting her to wander so far away from you as your words imply. Her father had no such thought when he made his will, I am sure. He meant you to retain the actual charge of his child, and expected Stanley and I to supplement your efforts, mainly in a financial way. When you came over here from Germany, Stanley was a boy of less than seventeen. Rosalie was five years old when he became of age. How did he get such a control of her, when you had such a long start of him?"

Miss Steiner bridled a little at the implication.

"*You* came here th last time," she replied, "with an idea in your head that *you* were going to do something, and ended by agreeing to everything that he suggested. I have done no more than that."

"But, I must repeat, Stanley suggested only those things of which I could approve," he said, blushing slightly. "There was nothing to differ about. I found the child strong, healthy, intelligent, tractable, courteous—what could I do but approve of that result?"

"And do you think, now, that she ought to be under the dominating influence of Mr. Melrose, dur-

ing the next six or seven years?" she asked, showing more earnestness. "Ought a girl to be under the absolute control of any man at an age when her character is subject to the most critical tests?"

He looked at the carpet for a minute and then replied that he did not know.

"This is new business to me," said he. "I had hoped and expected that you and Stanley would arrange everything between you to your mutual satisfaction. If you are to clash on this point, I must think it over."

It struck her that he was treating the subject lightly, and she hastened to tell him that she regarded it as a most important one. She had gained the courage to say so much that she thought she ought to finish this part of it now.

"I have allowed him to do about as he pleased with Rosalie thus far," she said, "because I could not absolutely say that he was wrong in any essential detail. But the time is near at hand when I must act. It will avail nothing to a girl that she has health, beauty and intelligence if her character is not moulded rightly."

"Certainly not," he admitted. "Character is everything in woman."

"And no *man*, though he were a saint, can properly mould it," continued Miss Steiner. "The only one who can do that is a person of her own sex."

"You want to regain the opportunities you threw away?" he said.

"Yes," she admitted. "I want the real guardianship over her that her father's will, as you have justly said, intended I should have. Now, I cannot get this without your aid, and the question is, will you give it to me?"

He felt that he ought not to make any promises without a consultation with Stanley, and he asked her not to press him for an answer at that time.

"I think there is something of reason in the position that you take," he said, "and I will talk to you later. No especial harm is being done at present, I suppose. I will see you again in a few days in relation to it."

Stanley smiled when Lysle broached the subject to him, the next day, as they sat in the law office of the attorney, on Broadway. He smiled because he had anticipated that the conversation would have to take place some time, in some form, and he had long ago decided to smile whenever it came.

"I do not know what to make of Cousin Janet," he said, calling her for the first time in Lysle's recollection by her Christian name. "I have consulted her repeatedly in relation to the smallest things about Rosalie—as well as the more important—and I have had an impression all the time that she regards me as an interloper, who is interfering with her private business. Now, according to Mr. Vandenhoff's will, I have certain duties to perform, and I intend to perform them in a way that satisfies my ideas of right. I take some pride in the showing I am able to make regarding our ward, for she has been, it is true, very much under my care. Occasionally Cousin Janet has hinted that things were not to her liking, but when I have mildly asked in what respect she was dissatisfied, she has always evaded the question, with one exception. Very recently she spoke about the slight knowledge of religious things that Rosalie had, and I gave instructions at once that she should have an hour a day devoted to that department of her education. It is the only time she has been definite in her

requests, and I did not lose a minute in acceding to her desires. And now she has evidently been complaining to you."

Stanley smiled again as he finished his statement, the same preconcerted smile as before.

"I should not call it a complaint," said Lysle, affably. "I asked her whether everything was going to her liking, and she spoke of the fact that Rosalie had become thirteen years of age, and asked me if such a girl ought not to be more under the care of a person of her own sex. That was about all there was to it."

Stanley smiled his third smile, but there was a look of discouragement mixed with it, that was intended to gain sympathy.

'It is rather hard to know how to take such a suggestion," he said, "when one looks at the facts in this case. With the exception of perhaps three hours a day—very seldom more, often less—Rosalie is entirely under the care and in the society of women. I take a short walk with her early in the morning, believing it beneficial both for her and myself. Sometimes she comes to my library and I talk to her of her studies for a little while after lunch. At night, when dinner is over, we usually stroll up to the Park and back. That is all. They have her all the rest of the time. Now, if I have not a right to that much of her I should like some one to tell me why."

He seemed to have made out his case, as he always did, and Lysle saw no flaw in it, on the surface at least.

"Her idea is, as I gather it," said he, "that the child has become so attached to you—has, I might say, acquired such faith in you—that she is influenced by your slightest word more than by the

labored arguments of any one else. And she does not think that a young girl—a growing girl, of her age—should be under that sort of influence from any person of the opposite sex, even though, to use her own words, he were a saint."

Stanley could not help a feeling of gratification at this statement of the attitude of Rosalie's mind, which he fully believed to be the true one. But it would not do to show this too strongly.

"If I have gained her confidence I may hope that I have deserved it," he said. "Children are famous judges of their elders. Not to appear egotistical, I will say that little people are not apt to bestow confidence in the wrong quarter. But there shall be no serious difference between Miss Steiner and me if I can prevent it. I shall be quite willing to leave the matter to you, my dear Lysle, to decide, if she is content with that. I shall not consent to any unreasonable abridgment of my rights, nor to anything that will injure the growing mind of my ward, and I know that you would propose none. We shall have to agree among ourselves, or else we must go to the surrogate and let him decide for us."

The fourth smile followed this suggestion, and Lysle supplemented it this time with one of his own.

CHAPTER XV.

"GOOD-BYE, LITTLE WOMAN."

That evening, while on his walk with Rosalie, Stanley had a talk with her in relation to the matter that had formed the basis of his conversation with Lysle, above outlined. He had become quite used to her longer skirts, and while she was and always would be a changed girl to him, they still had their confidences. In fact, the feeling that she was older and more capable of forming judgments made him discuss many things with her that he would not have thought of doing a few months previously.

"Did you know that I was thinking of taking a short trip to Europe?" he asked, suddenly.

"To Europe?" she repeated, startled. "How long shall you be away?"

"Not more than two months. I have some business there that I ought to see to in person, and I think of going very soon."

She was so much overcome at the novel idea that he could go anywhere away from her for two months that she did not know how to reply. The longest time she had ever been from him was two weeks, and that seemed an age.

"You do not say anything," he said, presently.

"I do not know what to say," she answered, in a depressed tone. "I cannot think of it well enough to form any sentences. I suppose you would not let me go with you, or you would have said so in the first place."

He saw that she was much affected, and that it was with difficulty that she subdued her emotion.

"*I* would let you go fast enough," he said, thinking it a good time to score a point, "if I could do exactly as I pleased about it. But there are Miss Steiner and Lysle. They would think it very foolish, I am sure."

"Why?" she asked, looking up. A ray of hope had come into her heart with the suggestion. "Miss Steiner has always said I should travel some day. This would be a good time to make a beginning."

"Perhaps she might not be ready to go at present," said he. "I must start very soon if I am to go this year."

She thought that a queer point to raise.

"Why, Stanley, there is no need of *her* going."

"And as for Lysle," he went on, as if he had not understood her, "he has only just come from there, and will certainly not care to return so soon."

She did not comprehend this point any better than the other.

"I don't see," she said, with a puzzled air, "why we need either of them. I am big enough to take every care of myself, with you to guide me. What use would a lot of other people be to us?"

It gave him a thrill of delight to know that she felt this way—that she was willing to put herself in his hands, to cross the sea with him—and it angered him to remember that he was tied by such bonds to inferior people who could control his actions and hers on a thing like this.

"Your father," he said, speaking with great deliberation, "left a will in which he arranged that three of us should have charge of you. One cannot do as he pleases if the others object."

She had heard of the will before and of her three guardians and their powers, but never till this moment had Stanley used the word "father" to her. It set her to thinking very deeply. She had often wanted to hear more about that relation, and now the first time that Stanley alluded to him it was to show that his most important act had been an unpleasant one in his consequences to her.

"Tell me about my father, Stanley," she said.

"I know very little of him. When I was a small boy he came to our house, but I have no clear impression of him. Miss Steiner says he was tall and quite large, and I have an idea that he was inclined to a blond cast."

She listened with bowed head and waited some time before she put the next query.

"And my—my mother?"

"I know nothing about her whatever. He married abroad and they both died there. At least, that is what I understand," he added, with the cautiousness of his profession.

"They are buried in Europe?"

"Yes, at Heidelberg."

They walked several blocks before either of them spoke again.

"Why do people die, Stanley?" she asked, at last. "I mean people who are not old. I used to think how wise it was that they grew old and ugly, for that must make them quite willing to die. But when they are young, as my parents were, what is it that makes them die then?"

He told her that there were various diseases that were apt to prove fatal, and reminded her of several persons whom she had known who had succumbed to illnesses.

"Yes, I know they do die," she replied, "but I do not understand why. Was it intended by God, when he made the earth, that people should die before they are old? It seems dreadful for the young to die. I—I should not like to die, Stanley."

He had never seen her look so sad as when she uttered these words, and it moved him deeply.

"We must all take care of our health in the best way we can," he replied. "You have never known what sickness is, and I ascribe it much to the exercise you have taken, and the efforts to give your lungs plenty of fresh air."

She looked at him gratefully.

"You did that," she said. "You always took me out of doors, did you not, and saw that the windows of my sleeping room were open at the top? Why did you take such pains with me?"

"It was my duty," he responded. "You were left to some extent in my charge, and I had to think of these things."

"But," she said, thoughtfully, "there were Lysle and Miss Steiner. I do not believe either of them would have done half as much."

"Lysle has been away," said he, "and Miss Steiner is a—a woman."

She was quick to notice the disparaging manner in which he alluded to the sex of her feminine guardian.

"You do not have a high opinion of women, Stanley," she replied. "I have noticed it often—and yet —I shall be a woman some day."

He tried to explain that there was a difference in women, and went as far as he thought advisable into his theories on that subject. He showed her why the methods pursued in the dress and education of

modern women had made them the inferiors of men. He dwelt on the general helplessness and weakness, both physical and mental, of many of her sex, and, related briefly the things he had done in Rosalie's infancy to rescue her from their condition. And with every word that he spoke she grew more and more grateful.

"I did not mean to say anything against Miss Steiner, in particular," he explained. "She would probably have done with you what ninety-nine in a hundred other women would under the same circumstances—kept you in such leading-strings that you would have had to have a servant at your heels every minute of your life. It is considered the right way to bring up girls, by a great many excellent people, and I have laid myself open to criticism for the departures that I have dared to make."

She inhaled a long breath of the pure air that rose from the earth.

"I am so glad that you did it!" she said, earnestly. "I shall live much longer on account of it, shall I not? I should almost crave death if I had to stay tied up in the house every time the weather is a little cold or damp, like so many ladies who are at the hotel. They often say to me that I am reckless to venture out when it is not warm and sunny. I tell them the only danger is in venturing in. The air out of doors always seems better to me than that in the rooms."

Her rosy cheeks and bright eyes told her story as eloquently as her language, and he enjoyed the testimony of all of them.

"And now, about this European trip of mine," he said, and a cloud came, in spite of all her efforts, across the happy face of a moment before. "I must

go, and you cannot go with me. That I regard as settled. But there is a great deal more that you will have to think of. You are growing older every day. Your other guardians—Miss Steiner and Lysle—both think that you are too old now to be with me as much as you have been. And when I come home we shall have to turn over a new leaf."

She had not the least idea what he meant, but she saw that it presaged a more complete separation for them, and it gave her poignant distress.

"Is it any—any fault of mine?" she managed to articulate.

"No. Nor of mine, either. I am a man, and you, until very lately, have been a child. We have acted together like two boys, for, though vested with authority, I have seldom used it over you. We have been comrades. But now you are going to be a woman, and women and men are not comrades."

It was a lame explanation, and it is no wonder that she did not understand it very well. She knew that Stanley had not told her this without giving the matter full thought, however, and that she would have to accept it as final. He was going away for a time, and upon his return he and she were to be no more the close friends they had been ever since she could remember. She understood that, and it was enough to lower her spirits perceptibly.

"I do not want to be a woman," she said, presently, in a low tone, "if it is to take me away from you."

"Why, my little girl," he answered, with an assumption of gayety, "you are almost crying. I have taught you never to let any sorrow or disappointment affect you, when you know it cannot be helped. Have you forgotten all your instructions?"

"Ah, but I never had a sorrow like this!" she replied, with feeling.

He tried to answer her, but there rose in his throat a choking that made utterance too difficult, and they finished their walk in silence.

When he told Miss Steiner that he had business that would call him to London, and that he might be gone several months, he was exasperated to see the pleasure that she was unable to conceal. He had long felt that there was a mystery about the Vandenhoffs that he ought to try to probe, and he could not resist throwing out a grappling-hook at that moment to see whether it would fasten to anything.

"I shall probably run over to Germany, also," he said, watching her narrowly. "Is there any errand I can do for you at Heidelberg?"

The ghostly hue that her face assumed would have induced suspicion in a less astute mind than that of the shrewd lawyer.

"Heidelberg!" she repeated. "What can you have to do there?"

"I think there may be a good deal," he responded, meaningly. "If you have any suggestions to make about my visit to that place I should like to hear them."

If white can grow whiter yet, her pale face paled as he spoke.

"Suggestions!" she said. "*I!*"

What was it, he wondered, that made the very name of Heidelberg frighten her like this? He had marked its effect before. As a lawyer he knew but one thing that could put that look on a face—Crime. But in this instance, what kind of crime?

"You know best what, if anything, you have to tell me," he said. "I am going in a very few days

If there is any time between now and then that you wish to see me, I shall always be at your disposal. I shall, of course, have to leave Rosalie with you and Lysle. I have never been long away from her, and I hope you will take every care of her during my absence."

She struggled with her words for some time before she could utter them.

"Do you doubt that my interest in her is as great as yours?"

"It may be greater. I only wished to remind you of your responsibility."

She tried again to answer him, but her emotions, whatever their cause, were too strong, and after a moment longer he took his leave, much puzzled.

Lysle congratulated Stanley warmly on his proposed trip, and said he was only sorry it could not be taken at a time when he could accompany him.

"You must visit Paris," he said, "if it is only for a few days, just to see the best kept city in the world and come home forever disgusted with the streets of your own New York. I will give you letters to friends there, and a note to the concierge of my hotel, who will admit you to my studio, where you can see what I have been wasting my time on for the past four years. My *chef d' œuvre* is there—the one I made from that model that Arthur Peck took away, and which you were so kind as to get back for me. Then there are three or four studies of Rosalie, that I finished up after I returned the last time. I kept the detail to finish at my leisure, you know, and I think the complete pictures are worth seeing. Stay as long as you like; we will take good care of the little one."

Rosalie had said so much to him that Stanley felt

no more the old jealousy of Lysle that he had once dreaded. On the other hand, he had acquired a new doubt in relation to Miss Steiner, amounting to almost a dislike that his ward should be much in her company.

"You do not intend to go anywhere away from New York?" he asked Lysle.

"Oh, no."

"I am glad of that. I wish you would be with Rosalie all you can. She is used to long walks with me, and she will miss them, unless you consent to take my place. Cousin Janet could never do it, and the others have their hands full now."

Lysle smiled.

"I do not think that our young lady is very fond of me," he said. "She may prefer to choose her own company."

Stanley thought it a good time to make an impression.

"You are her guardian," said he. "You have only to direct her, and my word for it, she will obey you. She has not been brought up to argue over a command."

Lysle looked quite startled at this proposition.

"I shall not go as far as that," he said. "You had better speak to her about it, so that we can have it fully understood before you go."

"Very well," was the reply. "And there are other things that I wish you would keep your eye on. Don't let them fill her head with nonsense."

"Of what kind?"

"Of any kind. Keep an oversight of her studies. They have begun to teach her religion, and I know by what she says to me that they are telling her some queer things. I am not sure that religion is

good for her, any way. I yielded to Janet without due thought, I fear. You seemed to side with her. Now is a good time to see that they do not make it too strong for a mind like Rosalie's. In short, you must act the part that belongs to you, as the only guardian left here—of the masculine persuasion."

The young artist had no idea what might be included in those duties, but he wanted to set his cousin's mind at ease, before he departed on his voyage, and he said to himself that Miss Steiner would be able to explain it to him, if there was anything of which he found himself ignorant. So he consented to all that was suggested, and Stanley seemed much pleased.

The voyager was to go aboard of his steamer at midnight, and he had to say good-bye to Rosalie when she returned with him from their last evening walk. He wondered whether there was not something beyond the usual words that he ought to indulge in, but he could not think of anything that seemed appropriate. He knew that the child's heart was full of grief, and he feared lest he should say something to make it overflow at the eyelids.

"Good-bye, little woman," he said. "I sail in the morning before you rise. You are to write to me very often, remember, and not to forget me while I am away."

"Good-bye," she replied, and turned toward the door.

"You might at least shake hands with me," he said, in a faint effort to be jocose.

"No," she replied, without turning her head, and her voice trembled. "I cannot—I cannot, indeed."

He thought for a second that he ought to call after her and bid her, with the authority that he possessed,

to obey him. Then he found that he was standing there alone, and shivering, and he went to Miss Steiner's parlor, just to say that he was going directly to his boat. He saw no need of waiting longer on shore.

"You are going to—to Heidelberg," she said, her face as pale as he had noticed it before. "If you find things there that you do not understand, do not act precipitously. You may put a wrong construction on what you discover. But you will be better off—we shall all be better off—if you keep away from there."

"I shall go," was his only answer.

CHAPTER XVI.

IT IS DIFFERENT WITH A GIRL.

None of the sentiments that had affected Stanley Melrose because of the increasing age of his ward, had any influence upon Lysle. She was still to him a child, and a year more or less in her age, or an inch more or less in the length of her garments did not signify in the least. He knew that she was not an ordinary child. He realized that she could not be treated as other children of her age could be. He also knew that, although she had seen but thirteen years, she had a body and mind fit for a much older girl. But she was only thirteen, after all, and he did not consider a girl of that age a very important personage.

Lysle thought it would be a rather interesting

thing to take Stanley's place, as her companion, as he had been asked to do for the little time he was to be away. Stanley had spoken to her about it, and had reported to him that she fully understood the part he was to play. On the very first evening after his cousin sailed—he omitted it in the morning quite from forgetfulness—he came to her at the close of dinner and asked whether she were ready for her usual walk. When she rose obediently, and went to get her cloak and hat, he had a sense of proprietorship that was novel and not by any means displeasing.

"Where have you been in the habit of walking?" he asked, as they gained the sidewalk.

"Wherever Stanley pleased," was her quiet answer.

"Have you any choice?"

"No."

He had hoped she had, as it would relieve him of making the selection, but as she had no preference, he thought it a good plan to stroll down town, where the crush of all-day travel had given way to the peace and quietness that comes at dark to the business quarter.

"I suppose Stanley is out of sight of land," he began, not knowing anything of more interest to talk about. "If he is sitting on the deck at this moment he can probably discern nothing but the vast blue sea. And it will be eight days before the prospect changes. How would you like to go to sea, Rosalie?"

She started from the reverie into which she had already fallen, to say that she thought she should like it very much. She was thinking, when he spoke, how much rather she would be on the ocean with

Stanley than on the shore with any one else in the world.

"You will have opportunity, by-and-by," he said. "It is part of your guardians' plan that you should see Europe within a few years. You will enjoy it greatly, I have no doubt. Then, if I am in Paris you will visit me, and you will also go to see your old home, your birthplace, in Heidelberg."

This set her to thinking again of her parents.

"Did you ever see my father, Lysle?"

"Not that I remember."

"Nor my mother?"

"No. Miss Steiner can tell you all about her. They were companions for a long time, I understand."

"There is something strange about that," mused the girl. "I have asked Miss Steiner about my mother, and she seems to avoid the subject. Stanley has asked her, too, and he gets no better satisfaction. He is going to Heidelberg before he returns, and find out all he can for me. He says it is mysterious that there should be not a single picture of either of my parents."

Lysle admitted that it was strange, and said, if there were photographs, as very likely there were, duplicates could be obtained, if the name of the photographer could be learned.

She seemed much more at ease with him, and more confidential than he had anticipated, and he was glad to note this. They were soon talking as unconstrainedly as if they had taken these walks together all their lives.

"It will be a long time before we get the first letter," she said, a few minutes later.

"Yes. Nearly three weeks."

"He said we ought to get it in a little over two," she answered.

"Between two and three."

"And, in all that time, we could not know, if his ship went to the bottom of the ocean?"

The question revealed how deeply her thoughts were fixed on the absent one.

"Ocean steamers very rarely sink," he replied. "I consider him just as safe there as we are on land."

She was silent after that for a little while, and then she astonished him by asking, suddenly:

"Lysle, what do you think about God?"

"They say," she continued, before he could decide what to reply, "that he is very good. They say that he loves us, and is like a father to us. Do you believe a father—a kind father—would take away the ones we like best, and then think we ought to be grateful to him for doing it?"

"I am afraid I cannot give you much information on that subject," he replied, smiling. "Religion is a thing that I have never thought about."

She looked very wise.

"I am studying it now, every day, for half an hour. I have read the whole of the New Testament, and am to begin on the Old very soon. I do not understand all I read, but Lisa says that it is not necessary—that nobody does. It seems to me strange that such an important study, as they say it is, should not have some one who can master it. I did not know anything about God till this year. And now I think about him more than anything else, and the more I think of the things he does, the harder it is for me understand him."

He felt so inadequate to guide her steps in this

matter that he could do little more than to keep silent, or to reply in monosyllables.

"In the first place, every baby needs a father and a mother, do they not? When I was a baby, God took them both, and left me to Miss Steiner, and to you, and Stanley. You are all very good, but why should you take the place that a real father and mother take with other children? And my parents, too, they did not want to die; they were both young. I have felt so sorry for them lately, since I have begun to think of these things! Oh, Lysle, it must be terrible to die when one is young!"

She could ask him more questions than he could answer, but he replied to this by admitting that it did seem hard.

"What do you suppose Lisa says about that?" she went on. "She says that God sees better than we, and that, although it may seem hard to us, he knows that it is best. That set me to thinking, to-day, that God might consider it best to sink the ship that Stanley is in, and never let it reach the port of Liverpool. It has nothing to do with the strength of the ship, you see, nor the quietness of the waves; it is only just whatever he pleases. Lisa tells me to love God—but I am waiting to see. If he should not let Stanley get safe to shore, I never could love him—no, never!"

He began to think that Stanley was right in his notion that too much religion might not do this young head any good, and he resolved to speak to her governess about it the very next day.

"I don't think God likes me, anyway," continued the child, "for if he had he would have left me my father and mother. And I shall never be easy till we hear from Stanley."

"Oh, we shall hear from him within eight or nine days," he replied, cheerily. "The ocean cable will tell us when his steamer arrives in sight of the Irish coast, and probably he will send a dispatch, himself, from Queenstown."

Her eyes opened wide.

"A dispatch? I do not understand. Can he telegraph across the sea just the same as we can on the land?"

The ocean cable was one of the things that Rosalie had never heard of, she not being a reader of the daily papers, and the idea that she had just imbibed was a very novel one to her.

"But he did not say anything about telegraphing," she said, when he had explained to her the workings of the submarine wires. "He only spoke of writing."

"That is because the idea of his safety being in doubt never entered his mind. People think no more now of taking an ocean steamer than they do of going a hundred miles on a railway. You will not have to reserve your faith in God as long as you thought," he added, smiling. "In eight or nine days you will be able to tell whether he deserves your confidence or not."

She grew much brighter at the unexpected news.

"If he carries Stanley safely," she said with earnestness, "I shall love him very dearly."

"And if he does not—"

"I do not see how he could expect it," she replied, soberly.

The next morning Lysle talked with Miss Steiner for some time, in relation to this conversation, urging at the close that Rosalie would be better off with fewer of these "dismal ideas" thrust upon her at

her age. Miss Steiner replied, however, that the only trouble was, to her mind, that the lessons came too late. Rosalie should have been taught these things years before, she said, when she would have imbibed them naturally, and not have been in the position to meet each truth she heard with the skepticism of her growing mind.

"She is nothing but a little heathen," she said, "as far as religious knowledge is concerned."

"She knows much more already than I," he replied, with a laugh. "I have never been bored with that sort of thing, and I have never been the worse, I think."

"Ah, but it is different with a girl," said Miss Steiner. "They must have it. Yes," she paused, and drew a long breath, "it is absolutely necessary for a girl to be taught religion. I beg you, do not interfere with Rosalie's education in this respect. It is a serious responsibility, the bringing up of a young girl, and religious training is of the first importance."

He did not like to argue the main question with her, as she seemed set upon it, but he suggested that it was doubtful whether Lisa was exactly the person to impart the wisest ideas in relation to the matter. He believed, and so expressed himself, that Miss Steiner ought to take that branch under her own supervision.

She smiled sadly at the proposal.

"I think that Rosalie has even less confidence in my judgment than she has in Lisa's," she replied. "Stanley has done it all. She has seen with his eyes so many years that she has none of her own now."

Always so harsh when Stanley was the subject at

issue! Lysle wondered why she could never reconcile herself to his cousin's methods, which seemed to him, on the whole, to have turned out admirably. He felt himself unable to regulate this matter of religious teaching, however, and let it drop for the present. The newspaper that he took to Rosalie, at the end of a week, to show her that Stanley's steamer had been sighted off Fastnet, was of more importance to him, and apparently to her. She had been quite pensive during the few preceding days, and her joy at knowing there was nothing to be feared from the storms of the sea was most manifest. She seemed to feel as if Lysle had something to do with the good news he had brought, and from that time they were better friends than they had ever been, or at one time ever promised to be.

Lysle did not like walking as well as Stanley did, but he was quite fond of driving, and soon he exchanged the after-dinner stroll for a Park drive before that meal. The season was early winter, and the weather was not always of the best, but unless it was actually raining they went out together between four and six every day. During these hours they grew very confidential, talking on the greatest variety of things. Rosalie found her circle of knowledge widening with her new association. Stanley had talked to her, almost to the last as to a child. Lysle talked of that great world from which she had been so thoroughly shut out. He gave her glimpses of life in Italy and in France, told her of the odd things to be seen in Holland, where he had once spent a vacation, and entertained her with accounts of the days when he climbed the Alps and the Pyrenees. And she, in her turn, told him of all she

could remember about her early experiences among the Indians, where she had learned to ride horseback, to swim, and to shoot with the bow-and-arrow. She told him of the trips she had made with Stanley —and Miss Steiner—into the northern part of the State, and about the great hawk she had shot with her rifle, after half the farmers in the neighborhood had sought to dispatch it in vain. In all of her stories the burden was what Stanley had said, and how Stanley had advised this or that. Indeed, it was to talk of Stanley that she liked most to ride with Lysle.

One of the last things that Stanley had done had been to give her the key to his library. Some of the things that Rosalie read there, even with no one to explain the parts that she could not comprehend, influenced the current of her thoughts to a marked degree. She read stories of romantic love, something she had never heard or dreamed of, and her young mind dwelt long on the strange revelation of that hitherto unknown land. She learned for the first time that men came to their lady-loves with downcast eyes and trembling lips, and sometimes begged the honor of their hands with knees bent in the dust. She learned that women could be coquettes, that they could pretend to love when they did not. She learned that vows made in all sacredness could be broken when a fairer face or manlier form—or worse still, a longer purse—could be gained by it.

How many questions she wanted to ask, as she read! But she knew she would get no satisfaction from Lisa; she never thought of going to Miss Steiner; and it was not the kind of information she thought she ought to get from Lysle.

One day when they were riding, they met a handsomely dressed couple, who were newly wedded. Lysle, quite thoughtlessly, called her attention to them, as one of the sights of the drive, and she made it the basis of several queries which had long been puzzling her.

"I do not think I ever saw a bride before, Lysle," she said. "Do they always dress like that?"

"They generally have a distinctive dress, I believe. To tell the truth, though, I hardly know what the American custom is. In Paris I have seen the bridal parties often, driving out in the suburbs to some restaurant for dinner, and the bride and groom could easily be distinguished by the gayety of their attire."

Rosalie pondered for some time.

"I think it is a good thing to be married, Lysle."

"Indeed!" he said, somewhat astonished.

"When one is young, it is all right to be single," she went on, musingly, "but when one grows old it does not seem as if he were meant to live alone."

"Then I suppose you intend to marry?" he said, inclined to find amusement in listening to such a weighty argument from her lips.

"Yes," she replied, positively.

"You have no one picked out yet, I suppose?"

She had to smile a little at this witticism.

"Of course not. I shall wait till I am past youth. While I am still young there will be no need of marriage."

"A nice plan you are making!" he cried. "Does it not occur to you that when you have passed your prime and get all ready for the marriage state, no one may propose to you?"

She looked up with a funny expression.

"Why, Lysle, I never thought of that!"

"You will have to take your pick of your admirers," he said, "while you are young and handsome."

Lysle was talking merely for amusement, to hear what this child would say, but it all had a basis of seriousness to her.

"I shall never be handsome," she said, very slowly. "I shall be strong and well, but never handsome. I do not like women who are handsome, Lysle."

He gazed for a moment at the clear, bright face, and thought there were few girls in New York or elsewhere more likely to make a very handsome woman than she. But he did not think it wise to tell that to her.

"And men?" he asked. "Do you object to men who are handsome, too?"

"I think I should," she answered. "I like to see a man tall, and powerful, and able to manage other men, but I would not care for him if he were handsome."

He recognized part of her description, and suggested:

"Something like Stanley would suit you."

"Yes," she said, thoughtfully. "Something like Stanley."

It did not occur to him to be jealous. Stanley would have taken immediate offence had the case been reversed, but there was a great difference between the cousins in that, as in everything else.

Rosalie had begun to consider Lysle a very pleasant fellow. She wondered, in thinking about him to herself, how it was that she had disliked him so long.

He was not like Stanley—no one, she thought,

could be that—but he was a very fair substitute, considering.

When they reached home she wrote a letter to Stanley, the regular semi-weekly epistle that he had learned to expect, and she read over for the twentieth time the last one she had received from him.

Soon, soon, now, he would be back again!

CHAPTER XVII.

STANLEY AT HEIDELBERG.

Mr. Stanley Melrose had become quite a figure on "the street." His fame as a lawyer who got verdicts for his clients was eclipsed by his reputation as a shrewd manipulator of securities. His especial mission to Europe was the placing of the bonds of a railroad in which he had a large interest. I have always noticed that whenever our American financiers find a lull in their usually active home business, they always run over to Europe and "place bonds." Mr. Melrose's railroad did not run anywhere in particular, and its entire rolling stock and locations were locked up each night in his large safe, but he intended to "place" the bonds, just the same. In which respect he did not differ from the presidents of many other railroads, having the same termini and equipment, who have "placed" the bonds of their corporations in the European market, year after year, in an attempt to fill a demand that is never apparently satisfied.

There were now old fogies who had begun to look

askance at Melrose and his methods. There were directors in solid corporations who would not even examine any scheme that had his name attached to it. The rising Napoleons of finance always meet with such men, but they can afford to ignore such jealous opposition, when all the rest of the financial world bows in adoration at their feet. The style of doing business to-day is different from that of the period when the aforesaid fogies were in their prime. The needs of a great and growing country—and of a great and growing crowd of speculators—will not permit of anything slow in the manipulation of the market. Melrose had his admirers, numbered by the hundred, and his name had become a synonym for bold operations. When he started for Europe to "place" the bonds of the Tallahassee & Lake Superior Railroad, those bonds were as good as placed, and the whole financial world was forced to admit it. The stock, which had been sagging off, took a sudden start, and his agents who were left at home, unloaded on the guileless public all they dared of the last batch received from the printer.

It was the old story without a single variation.

Having "placed" his bonds, dined with a number of London capitalists, and seen the principal wonders of the metropolis of the world, Stanley, like every other American who has preceded or followed him to England, crossed the Channel. He made no pause between the shore and Paris, where he was received almost as soon as he arrived, by his old acquaintance Arthur Peck, who had tendered him the hospitalities of the city. Arthur had continued to alternate between New York and Paris, ever since he was first introduced to the reader. He went home only when the demands of his father become too urgent to

resist, and returned as soon as his business engagements would permit. The elder Peck had made quite a large fortune in electrical lines, and Mr. Melrose had assisted him in "placing" some of his bonds, in which he had acquired an interest, along with those of the T. & L. S. R. R. Arthur was supposed to be at present in Europe for the purpose of making the work of Mr. Melrose easier to accomplish, and he found the vacation from his father's office a very delightful one.

Young Peck did not take Mr. Melrose to his little apartment in the Rue Marbeuf. Neither did he escort him, when the shades of evening fell, to the Mabille, or to any of its numerous imitators. He wanted for many reasons to keep on the right side of this light of the financial world, and he had no idea that his good graces could be kept or gained by following such a course. He had, therefore, taken rooms at the Grand Hotel, some days before his arrival, and limited the excursions that they were to make together, to the round usual with tourists who place themselves under the guidance of Mr. Cook.

Melrose was duly impressed—as what American is not?—with the beauty and cleanliness of the city, but thought that a little Yankee "go" might be infused into some of its departments to advantage.

"One of the things I must not forget to do is to take a look at Lysle's studio," he said to his friend, one morning. "He has given me a letter to the concierge, as he calls her, and the keys of his rooms. Would you like to go with me? I think we shall find some very good paintings there."

The concierge read the note that Lysle had sent, and hesitated for a few moments before she granted the gentlemen permission to ascend the stairs. It

was an unprecedented thing for her lodger to send any one there, and a Parisian concierge does not look with favor upon the extraordinary. Peck smiled as she looked up at him, and addressing her in French, explained that M. Melrose was a first cousin of Monsieur Lysle, and almost the same to him as a brother. The woman then read the letter again, and after receiving a five-franc piece from Peck, announced that everything seemed to be all right and that she would show them at once to the room they wanted.

"You will find things rather dusty," she said, as she halted before the door. "It was the command of monsieur when he went away that we should not attempt to sweep or touch the place in his absence. He is very particular, and even when he is here he dons an old suit and persists in remaining about when the cleaning is going on. Oh, the monsieur americain is very set about that. He must have the room dusted exactly as he wishes. For the past year, only Clothilde has entered it for this purpose."

Peck started at the name "Clothilde," for he knew she had once been Lysle's model.

Mr. Melrose took the keys, opened the door and entered, while Peck stayed a moment longer at the door to converse with the concierge, whom he had all at once found vastly entertaining.

"Is Mlle. Clothilde still with you?" he inquired.

"Mais, non," replied the woman, with a shrug of her shoulders. "He has sent her to a little boarding school at Raincy, to learn music. A fine thing, is it not, and she already twenty-four years old! I think it is nonsense, but it is no affair of mine."

"She will, of course, return when he dies?" ventured the interrogator.

"Without doubt," said the concierge, turning the five-franc piece over in her hand.

Then, somebody calling her, she went down stairs, and he entered the studio.

"Here is the picture that has made my cousin famous," said Stanley, calling to his friend from the farther part of the room. He had recognized it by the description.

Arthur was startled. It was truly a magnificent work. It seemed as if Suzette stood there breathing before him, and he had provoked her to anger too often not to recognize the faithfulness of every detail.

"It is perfect!" he answered, after a full minute had elapsed.

Stanley glanced from the picture to Arthur and back again.

"Did you ever see her look like that?" he inquired, lost in curiosity.

Peck smiled at his earnestness.

"You are asking me to reveal family secrets. However, I don't mind telling you that I have. Suzette is a combination of angel and devil. Your cousin had her at her worst in that pose."

"But how could he make her retain that expression long enough to paint it?"

Arthur told him the trick that Lysle had resorted to, as he had gleaned it from the girl herself, and Stanley pronounced it a very clever expedient.

"Much cleverer than I should have supposed Lysle could have invented," he said, thoughtlessly, for he did not mean to disparage his cousin to this fellow, who had, he knew, no great liking for him. "What do you suppose that would sell for, in cash?"

Arthur had heard that Lysle had been offered a

sum equal to $8000 for the painting, when it hung in the Salon, and said so. Stanley was overcome with surprise at the size of the figure.

"He was a dunce not to take it," he said. "I suppose he has not a cent of insurance on it here. He has no idea of business. Let us see what else he has got."

The pictures of Rosalie were the next ones to attract attention, and Stanley wished, as he gazed at them, that Arthur Peck were further away. It brought his mind back to America, to see those bits of canvas, and to the village in the mountains where they had been painted, that summer when they were all so happy together. He had not known fully until that minute how much he had missed his ward, notwithstanding the fact that he had thought of her hourly ever since they were separated. But the pictures were not of the Rosalie who had said good-bye to him. They were of that other Rosalie who had romped with him among the Indians, who had lifted her arms to be carried over deep fords, who had sported with him in the breakers at Cape May, summer after summer. The Rosalie of these canvases was not thirteen years of age. She had not reached a period when her relations with her guardian must be restricted, to silence the comments of the idiots who make np the bulk of mankind. She did not wear gowns that reached to her ankles. It gave him a bad turn to see and to think, and he turned sadly away, and went to another part of the studio, where Peck had resurrected something that caused him to utter an exclamation.

All the pictures that Lysle had painted of Clothilde, from the ones that he had done in M. Jouanneau's studio to the latest study of her face

and fully draped figure, were there together. Peck knew them the instant his eyes rested on them, and he could not help giving utterance to the expression that had attracted the attention of his companion. The nude one, representing the girl lying asleep in the sands, was the first he discovered, and it was the work of but a moment to take it up and place it in a good light on an easel. All the desire that he had felt to possess that girl came over him with redoubled strength as he gloated over the beauties of her person thus revealed to him.

At school at Raincy! He would find her, and next time she should not escape him!

Stanley Melrose had heard of nude paintings, taken from a living model, but he had never seen one till now. The picture startled him much more than it did Peck, though for a very different reason. For several minutes they stood looking at it together.

"Wonderful!" said Arthur, at last, in a tone of the most intense admiration.

"It is indeed!" said Stanley. "And do you suppose Lysle actually painted that from a living girl?"

Arthur Peck gave a quick glance at the financier, and marked the strange expression in his face. Beads of perspiration had gathered on his forehead, and his hand that held the handkerchief with which he essayed to wipe them away, trembled.

"From the girl herself?" repeated Peck. "To be sure he did. You do not think he could paint that from his imagination, do you? I have seen the girl, and I know that the likeness is perfect."

"You—have—seen—" began Stanley, stammering out the words.

"To be sure. She was in my employ once, and a pretty little fuss she made because I tried to kiss her one morning. You would have thought that she would faint dead away if asked to exhibit her shoulders. Ah, the minx! But she came here and posed for Monsieur Lysle, and thought nothing of it! The jade!"

He shook his fist half-angrily, half-playfully at the sleeping beauty.

"Then you never saw her like—like that?" said Stanley, still much moved.

"Oh, no. But I have heard where she is now, and I shall turn artist myself."

Stanley, who had been in such a perspiration, began immediately to shiver. He drew out his watch in a shaking hand, and said they must be going. He but suddenly remembered an engagement.

A few days later he took the train for Heidelberg. He could not get the "Sleeping Girl" out of his mind.

As the train sped on, he grew quite indignant at all forms of immorality. He was sure that there ought to be a law forbidding the painting of nude women. He thought harshly of Lysle, and wished he had said less to him about associating so closely with Rosalie. A man who could draw a picture like that was not fit for the companionship of a pure young girl. If Lysle did not soon return to France, Stanley resolved that some way must be invented to keep him out of Rosalie's way. He grew very tender as he thought of the child, and hoped no harm would ensue from leaving her to the care of her other guardians, during the short time he had

to be away. Neither of them seemed to him quite fit to have the charge of her.

He was very glad to get to Heidelberg, but what he discovered there startled him more than anything he had anticipated. He first visited the cemetery where Max Vandenhoff was buried. Then he searched the records of the Rath-Haus, hunted up various officials, talked with several landlords, and conversed with some of the prominent citizens and with the best posted foreign residents. So adroitly were his questions phrased that no suspicion was aroused, but as he went on his wonder grew greater than ever, and when he had learned all he could he lost no time in starting for home. He neither wrote nor telegraphed to announce his coming. On the vessel he sat all day immersed in his thoughts, overwhelmed with the magnitude of his discoveries.

It was in the forenoon of a February day that Stanley Melrose received Miss Janet Steiner in his law office on Broadway. He had landed quietly, and gone directly there instead of to the hotel, and had sent a note requesting her presence. As soon as she could don her garments and get to him, she was there. And, as the clerks had previously been instructed, they showed her into an inner room, where he sat awaiting her.

They were both much agitated. For five minutes neither spoke a word. Like fencers, each seemed waiting for the other to begin. Stanley looked at the woman several times, while her gaze rested stolidly on one of the pictures of eminent lawyers that adorned the wall.

"I have been there," he said at last, and for the

first time he could remember, in that room, his voice was unsteady.

She looked up then, with a mute and frightened inquiry in her eyes.

"To Heidelberg?"

She waited still for him to proceed.

"I do not know all that it will be my duty to do," he continued, after a pause. "But to begin with, you must have no more to say to Rosalie."

The woman tried twice to speak and failed. Then she held out her hands in the attitude of supplication.

"I am not sure when I shall be ready to say any more than that," he went on, as she did not speak. "I do not wish to attract attention at present, and it is best that you should continue to reside at the hotel, but you must let the child entirely alone. I will leave it to you to invent excuses to the governess and Lysle. You will make it much better for yourself if you decide to make a full confession to me. I do not wish to proceed to extremes if I can help it. Perhaps you have already concluded to do this?"

She seemed like one suffering with partial paralysis, and it affected her utterance to a marked degree, as she essayed to reply.

"I told you—you would—come to—wrong decisions," she said, feebly.

He had had witnesses on the stand too many times to allow this to disconcert him.

"Why, Janet," he said, disdaining to attach the title of relationship, "I have been to the cemetery where he is buried. I have talked with the keeper. I have looked at all the records. And do you mean to tell me that I am wrong?"

She inclined her head spasmodically in the affirmative.

"And that you are guilty of nothing?"

"Not—of what you—think," was the almost inaudible reply.

"Is it your intention to tell me of what you *are* guilty, or do you prefer that I should unveil it in my own way?"

She roused herself a little.

"I have never harmed you!" she exclaimed. "Why should you unveil it at all?"

"For her sake," he answered, impressively.

"Rosalie's!"

She uttered the name of the child with a gasp.

"Yes."

"It would give her sorrow all her life!" she replied, earnestly. "If you care anything for her happiness, you will say no more!"

"That is impossible," said he. "The only question is, will you tell me the whole truth, in which case I am willing to aid you, or let me go on in my own way?"

"How long can I have to decide?" she asked, in a whisper.

"Three days."

Miss Steiner rose, bowed low, and left him alone

CHAPTER XVIII.

"DON'T CALL ME A CHILD!"

Rosalie was so overjoyed to see Stanley, after his long absence, that she came very near throwing herself into his arms when he appeared at dinner that evening. She had become so natural in her manner, through her contact with Lysle, who never dreamed of giving her the least directions about her conduct or anything else, that she had to blush for her precipitation as she saw that Stanley gave it his mild disapproval. No one but Miss Steiner knew that he had arrived in the city, and she forebore to mention that she had seen him. Lysle, not having heard that he had come, was dining out, and there was an air of stiltedness to the meal that was not usual.

Stanley talked a little, to be sure, about the sights he had seen in London, and the other places that he had earliest visited, and of which he had written long letters to the girl. Rosalie hoped he would speak of his own accord on what she had most in mind, but he did not, and at last she introduced the subject herself:

"Did you go to Heidelberg, as you intended?"

He could not help glancing at the face of Miss Steiner, who sat directly opposite to him, and he saw the distress there.

"Yes," he answered. "It has a very pretty situation, but I should not care to make it a permanent home as so many Americans do. I prefer Paris."

"I was not thinking of that," she replied slowly.

"I wanted to know what you heard about my parents."

He wished she had asked him at another time, as he felt very uneasy about what the result might be. Miss Steiner looked as if she were liable to faint at any minute.

"I talked with several people who knew your father," he said, evasively, "and I visited his grave."

She realized at once that he was concealing something.

"My father?" she repeated. "Did you not see my mother's grave, also?"

He raised his eyes to Miss Steiner's, unable to help it.

"Your mother is not buried there," he said, firmly.

Rosalie was too surprised to notice at first the pallor that covered the face of her other guardian.

"Where is my mother buried, Miss Steiner?"

"In—in France," was the stifled reply.

"Why, you are ill!" exclaimed the child. She touched the bell, and as a maid appeared she called her attention to the condition of the lady. As Miss Steiner vacated the room, she cast an appealing glance at Stanley. Brief as was the interchange of thought, it was sufficient to ask him to quiet the child's inquisitiveness, and for him to answer that he had no intention of letting her know the truth.

"What have you been doing since I have been away?" he asked, as soon as the equilibrium was restored. "Riding out every day with Lysle, I hear, and forgetting to take those long walks that you used to think so fine."

It pained her to hear him speak in this flippant manner. They had just been referring to the sub-

ject of her dead parents, and she wondered that he could be so thoughtless. More than this, she thought his references to Lysle neither witty nor called-for.

"He wanted to ride," she replied, "and I had nothing to say about it. You told me I was to obey him. But is that all you have to tell me about what you learned in Heidelberg? Did you find no portraits of my parents? I have thought of them a great deal since you went away, and have hoped you would bring back something that would show me how their faces looked."

He might as well have it out, he thought, and he told her he had found nothing.

"It was because I did not find anything, Rosalie, that I wanted to change the subject as soon as I could. There is nothing to tell, and it is painful to me to talk in relation to it."

She looked much depressed, but obediently said no more. She felt that a great change had somehow taken place in him. He was not the Stanley he used to be. He was more reserved, and a good deal sterner. He seemed much older, and very far removed from her, in a way that she could not understand. It was a great disappointment, and she was a long time going to sleep—longer even than on that saddest night she had then ever known, the night his steamer took him out to sea.

In the morning Lysle, not having yet heard of Stanley's arrival, came for her, as was his custom. She was sitting with her things on, in the parlor, waiting for Stanley to come down, and as it was past the hour when he had always met her she had grown slightly uneasy. As Lysle greeted her she told him the news, which he received with surprise.

"Stanley here!" he exclaimed. "Why did he not write to let us know he was coming? I supposed him still somewhere in Germany. Well, if that is the case, my nose is out of joint, I suppose," he added, with a laugh.

They chatted for ten minutes more, and then Rosalie, grown very uneasy, rang for the hall-boy and asked him to go to the room of Mr. Melrose and see if anything was the matter. He presently returned with the information that Mr. Melrose had gone to bed late, and did not intend to rise for another hour.

He had evidently forgotten all about his habit of walking before breakfast when in New York. Two months of foreign customs had made a change in him.

"I hope you won't give up your walk on that account," said Lysle, as she rose and began to take off her hat. "Stanley is probably tired out with his journey. He will be all right to-morrow. Let me go with you this morning as I have been doing."

She had much rather not have gone. She felt a mental sensation the like of which she had never experienced, but she assented and accompanied him to the street.

"How is he looking?" asked her escort.

"Just the same," she replied, briefly; but it was not true. Stanley had never looked to her as he did now, and she thought with a bitterness that was quite foreign to her young heart, that he never would look as he used.

It was not because he had wanted to sleep instead of taking that walk with her—the walk they had never missed since she was a wee thing who had to hold his hand in the crowded streets to keep from

letting the throng push her away from him. If he had only sent her some regretful word by the messenger—something scribbled on a piece of paper! He had forgotten her, that was only too evident. She had never forgotten him, never, when he was at home or away. She did not know whether she wanted most to cry, or to strike him with something that would hurt.

"He wrote me that he went to my studio," continued Lysle, oblivious of the torrent that was raging in the little breast. "There are six pictures of you there, Rosalie, that I drew five years ago, when we were up in the country. On one of them I got a medal at the Salon."

The last words aroused the slumbering flame and in a second it burst forth:

"And that is all that you care about me!" she cried, tempestuously. "I am only something to paint into a picture that will bring you a medal! It is a good thing that you do not sell your pictures, or some man with money could buy all of me you think worth anything! I am nothing, nobody! I wish I had never been born! I should be glad if I could die!"

Her indignation at the slight that Stanley had put upon her had found vent upon Lysle, as the most convenient object at hand. He stopped in the street, which was almost deserted, and gazed at her, too astounded to speak.

"It is not you alone!" she went on, for she had not enough diplomacy to conceal the real cause of her excitement. "Stanley is just as bad. He had no business to send me a message like that, after I had got up, dressed and waited half an hour for him! I shall not forget it, either! When he wants

me to go again, I shall let him wait, as he has let me. Miss Steiner, too—what does she care about me? She is asleep, as he is! I have not one friend —not one!"

She had roused him at last.

"Rosalie, Rosalie! my dear child!" he cried.

"Oh, don't call me a child!" she retorted. "I am not a baby. I do not know much, but I am not a fool! He has tried his 'methods' on me, and you have practiced with your brush, and neither of you think that I have feelings—that I am not a stick! I am almost fourteen, and it is time some one showed me consideration. When he sent me that message, do you know what I had half a mind to do? I thought of going up there and breaking his door! Yes, I did! I will tell him so, too, when I see him again!"

With every sentence she struck her foot on the pavement, while her features showed the nervous excitement under which she was laboring. Lysle hesitated to say much to her, but he took her arm gently and they resumed their walk.

It was the first time that the girl had ever given way to her temper, but the tendency to do so had been hers more than once. Stanley supposed, merely because there was no outward manifestation, that she had that complete control of herself which he believed every human being capable of attaining. It would have been as great a surprise to him as it was to Lysle could he have seen her now.

The walk continued in silence for some time, when suddenly Rosalie lifted her doleful face to that of her companion.

"I am sorry for what I said, Lysle—about *you*

I was angry at Stanley, and I said what I had no right to say to *you*. You—you will not mind it?"

"Not at all," he responded, quickly. "I was only wondering if you were not partly right. I did paint you in order to do a good piece of work and increase my fame. I am afraid it was not a good motive, when I recollect that you are my cousin and my ward. It occurs to me that I ought not to have used your face for that purpose."

She was quite ashamed when she found that she had saddened him.

"Now, don't *you* get cross!" she replied. "It was perfectly right for you to paint from me, and I am very glad you did it. I am really very glad. I wish you would paint another, as I look now." She paused, and turned red. "No, I don't mean as I look *now*, but as I ought to look, and as I am always going to look, after this, when I am with you."

She would not rest content till he had promised her what she asked, but he said at first that he should not think of exhibiting it, as he had the other. They disputed good-naturedly over this point for some time, and finally he said he would decide that point when the picture was completed. This being settled, he begged her to include Stanley in her forgiveness, and dismiss the whole affair from her mind.

"I do not like to see you do anything that makes you unhappy," he said, "and you and he are too good friends to quarrel over a little thing like this."

"But it is not a little thing!" she exclaimed. "You cannot see it as I do. When he comes to ask me to walk with him, I shall remind him of this morning. Yes, I cannot help it. Then, when I hear what he says, I can tell better what I shall answer."

Nothing that he was able to advance could change her from this position, and he left her at the St. Nicholas with some misgivings. Stanley, who had just come down to breakfast as she arrived, spoke to her in the ordinary way, not alluding to the morning walk, and the meal was a very quiet one. Miss Steiner, who sent word that she was indisposed, did not make her appearance. Stanley was evidently wrapped in his own thoughts so closely that he hardly knew what was going on around him.

Rosalie went to her lessons with a sore heart. At lunch Stanley did not come home, a practice that was not infrequent with him on his busiest days, and as Miss Steiner was still absent from the table, the girl ate her meal alone. Lysle, who had been uneasy about her, came around at four o'clock to see if she would take her customary drive, and to his delight she went without demur. During the ride he again begged her to drop all thoughts of the affair of the morning, but she still felt the rankling in her breast, and would make no promises. Stanley ate his dinner with as few words as he had his breakfast, and when it was ended sat back in his chair half-an-hour, wrapped in dead silence.

"Do you want to go out for a short walk?" he asked, starting up suddenly. "I have a good deal of work to do, and I cannot be out long."

"I am not particular," she answered. "I have been out riding for two hours, and I had a very long walk this morning, before breakfast."

He knew that there was something strange in those tones, but his mind was too full of other things to think of it very seriously.

"Whom were you with?" he asked, aimlessly.

"Why, Lysle, of course."

He uttered a pronounced "Umph!" took up his hat, which lay on the rack, and went up-stairs.

She had never thought it possible to be so lonesome as she was after he had gone. She would have been glad to have had even Miss Steiner there. She went to bed earlier than usual, but could not compose herself to sleep for a long time.

In the morning she lay purposely beyond her usual limit, thinking that Stanley would send the maid to call her, and take her to task for keeping him waiting, thus giving her the chance she wanted to answer him. But he did not come down till breakfast was served, and when that meal passed like those of the preceding day, she was utterly miserable.

CHAPTER XIX.

INDISPUTABLE DOCUMENTS.

The months went by, and nothing in particular was changed in relation to the attitude of the principal characters in our story toward each other. Stanley had roused himself to attend to his personal business, after a fashion, but he was not by any means the sharp, alert man he had been. Lysle remained in America, though he felt that he was wasting time that ought to have been used to better advantage, for try as he might, he could not do his best work in the atmosphere of New York. Stanley so thoroughly neglected Rosalie, and Miss Steiner had so much less to say to her than she used, that he felt that he could

not go. It would be leaving the girl in the hands of no one but her hired teachers, which he did not like to contemplate. Rosalie herself, who had now passed her fourteenth birthday, had changed as much as either of her two elder guardians. The conduct of Stanley had depressed her spirits to a marked degree, and this state of mind was succeeded by a condition that could hardly be called less than morose. She kept at her studies, and took her walks and rides with Lysle, but all the brightness of youth and the vivacity of childhood seemed to have gone out of her.

Lysle was immensely pained at all this, but he had no idea where to find the remedy. He knew that it was associated in some way with the changed attitude of his cousin, but he did not see how he could go to him and demand that he resume his old manner. Stanley had given much more of his time to her for a dozen years than any one could have claimed was his duty. If he had other business to attend to now, it was for the junior guardian, if anybody, to step into the breach. The only thing that troubled Lysle was a knowledge of his inability to fill the vacant place, not only in the estimation of his ward, but in any other sense whatever. Stanley had a "method" that he had adopted with Rosalie, which seemed to work wonders. Lysle had no method, and he had not even the smallest conception of the way to frame one. He could merely let her do as she pleased, and this did not give full satisfaction either to her or himself. A gloom had settled on them all which he had not the slightest idea how to remove, and yet which he felt he could not bear much longer.

In the occasional brief talks that he had with Stanley, there was nothing said that could give a clue to

any reason for the changed order of things. The lawyer pleaded business as an excuse for everything, and there seemed justice in the claim. When the vacation season arrived, and Lysle asked him what places he thought Rosalie had best be taken to, the reply was that he could suit himself about that. And when Lysle mentioned that he ought to run over to Paris, if only for a month or two, to attend to the things he had left there, Stanley astounded him with the question, "Why don't you take her over there with you?"

"Take her over!" repeated Lysle, as if he could hardly believe he had heard aright. "What do you think Miss Steiner would say to that?"

"Janet?" responded Stanley, rather contemptuously. "She would probably say nothing about it at all. If she did it would not matter. You and I are a majority, you know."

Lysle's eyes opened wide.

"But supposing she put her foot down, and said she would not go?"

"In that case, you could take Lisa and get along just as well. In fact, I think, a little better. There are things about Janet—but, never mind. The probability—I might say the certainty—is that she would not go with you, but that ought not to interfere with your plans in the least."

Could it be Stanley who was saying these things?

"You seem to have great confidence in Lisa," said Lysle, after a slight pause.

"I have confidence in no women," was the peculiar reply. "She is doubtless as good as the rest of them. I should not want Janet to go, and if I could

give you my reasons you would quite agree with me."

The artist was lost in wonder. What could such expressions mean in that connection?

"Your insinuations are serious," he said. "If you know anything that affects Miss Steiner's fitness to have the care of Rosalie, it is your undoubted duty to tell me at once."

His voice was firm and his earnestness beyond question. Stanley wondered how he could have doubted this fellow's goodness merely because he had painted the picture of a nude female. He was evidently an artist and nothing else—a sort of woman, himself, in masculine attire.

"It is a serious matter, Lysle," he answered, "and I do not like to tell you. I have been trying to think what it is best to do about it for a long time,—ever since I returned from Europe,—and I cannot quite decide. It is true that you have a right to know, but the subject is so painful that you will not thank me if I take you into my confidence. Accept my advice and ask nothing more about it."

Lysle brushed his hair back from his forehead with his hand, and was silent for a full minute.

"Does it concern Rosalie?" he asked, at last, and the firmness that had been in his voice was no longer there.

"It does. It concerns us all. And yet, I tell you again, you will be sorry if you compel me to tell you any more."

"It is not a question whether it will or will not sadden me," was the young man's answer. "If it affects our ward, I must know it. You have no right to keep it from me."

"If you are sure that you wish to know it, I shall

tell you," said Stanley, after a long pause. "But you must first promise to take no steps unless I consent."

"I promise," replied the other, wonderingly.

"The first thing that aroused my suspicions," began Stanley, "was because Miss Steiner seemed so much affected whenever she was asked anything about the Vandenhoffs. I have tried a dozen times, if I have once, to learn something of their lives in Europe, while she was with them, and the particulars of their deaths, but always without success. The moment I touched upon the subject, she would be taken with a faintness, and be able to make only the briefest replies. For a time I ascribed this to her natural disinclination to discuss a painful theme, but her evident alarm the day when I announced my intention of visiting Heidelberg could not be accounted for on any such hypothesis. I tried several times to induce her to talk, but she was too agitated to say anything. Then I decided to pretend that I already knew something about the matter, and asked her to explain to me whatever she pleased before I made my journey. All she would say to this was that it would be better for both of us if I did not go to Heidelberg at all, and that I should be sure to misunderstand what I learned there if I did. There was nothing left for me but to go. I think you would have felt the same."

Lysle's attention was fixed. He responded to the implied query by a nod of his head, fearing to break the continuity of the narrative if he spoke.

"My first act on my arrival was to visit the Protestant cemetery, and seek out the Vandenhoff lot. You are doubtless prepared to be astonished, but you can imagine that I was no less so at the

discovery that I made there. In that lot, Lysle, there is but one grave!"

The listener could only repeat in deep tones, "But one grave?"

"But one—that of Max Vandenhoff. I asked for the address of the undertaker who had officiated at his interment. When I found him, he said he remembered the circumstances surrounding the burial perfectly. He had known Herr Vandenhoff slightly. The gentleman had lived long in the town as a bachelor, but had been away for some years—to France, it was understood. Yes, he had heard that the Herr had married there, or in England, or one of those countries, but it was remarked that no wife had accompanied his body when it was brought on the train for interment. Only Miss Steiner had come, and everybody wondered at her intense grief, for she was after all no relation. She did not stay long, not longer than was necessary to place the stone over the dead man's grave. No, the undertaker had never heard that Mrs. Vandenhoff had had a child. It might be, but he had not heard, and he kept well posted in all the gossip of the place. He would ask his wife, who was within doors, and when he had done so he still shook his head. I went from him to the house where Max had stayed, and to the hotel where Janet lived when she came with his body, and no one knew anything more."

Lysle brushed his hair back again. Had he been accused of some terrible thing himself he could hardly have been more affected.

"What do you suspect?" he asked, in a whisper.

"I told you that what I had to say would not be agreeable," was the answer. "I know of but one

reason that should cause the concealment of a death, in a case like this. Miss Steiner had never intimated to me that Mrs. Vandenhoff did not lie by the side of her husband. When I spoke of it, on my return, she stammered out the information that the lady was buried in France. I told her that night that she must tell me the whole truth, or I should take pains to have it made known in some other manner. For the next fortnight she was too ill to leave her room. Since then, though we have met repeatedly, she has volunteered nothing that might tend to clear up the mystery. Refusal to explain is confession."

"That is putting it strongly," said Lysle, feebly.

"I am quoting a maxim of law. But I have not told you all. I gave her a direct series of questions one evening after that, with no better result. 'Were you with Mrs. Vandenhoff when Rosalie was born?' 'Yes.' 'Were you there when she died?' 'Yes,' after a good deal of hesitation. 'Do you know where she is buried?' No answer. 'Will you take me to the spot?' And what did she say then! 'Oh, no, no! Do not ask me anything more! I cannot answer you!'"

The faith he had summoned was beginning to leave the younger man. It certainly looked like a strong case of circumstantial evidence.

"And you think that she—"

"Yes."

As fixed as the idea had become in Lysle's mind what his cousin meant, it shocked him to hear this.

'And her motive?" was the next query.

"It may have been any one of a dozen. Spite, jealousy, cupidity. We do not know at this moment that the will which was proven as Max Vandenhoff's is genuine. It gave her $25,000, and a guardianship

of his child, equivalent to support for herself for twenty years. It gave you and me something, it is true, perhaps to quiet our suspicions, but the real will may have given us much more."

Lysle's blood seemed for a moment to freeze in his veins.

"Have you uttered these suspicions to any one else?" he asked.

"To no one."

"Then you must not," he said, firmly.

"Must not? Have I no duty to perform?"

"You can perform no such duty as you have in mind," replied Lysle, in the same tone, "without making it certain that Rosalie will learn of this matter. And that would be a worse thing than any you would try to remedy."

Stanley stared at him in surprise.

"But if she were an imposter? If Miss Steiner had brought her here to inherit a fortune that is not honestly hers!"

Lysle bowed his head to conceal his emotion.

"At the present that, at least, is far from being proven," he replied. "I tell you, you must go very carefully in a thing like this. I must have a talk with Miss Steiner myself."

"You!"

"Certainly."

"I ought to be present," said Stanley, not liking the idea of a private conference between these people.

"It would be better not," was the answer. "You have tried to get the true story from her, and on your own statement, have failed. I will not say that I am any more likely to be successful, but if there is any chance that I shall be, I must attempt it alone."

He had never seen Lysle so much in earnest. He wondered what had given him this new strength of mind.

"Very well," said Stanley, as he saw that the promise left him the judge of what evidence he might think sufficient. "But let me warn you of one thing. A woman who is guilty of a crime is a most dangerous creature to deal with. She will do things that no man would dream of to convince you."

"It is for us to prove her guilty," said Lysle, impressively. "She is entitled to the presumption of innocence till that is done. I shall see her as soon as possible, and when I have done so I shall be better able to talk to you. But—mind!—not a word that can reach Rosalie!"

Miss Steiner had no suspicion of Lysle's errand when she came into her parlor in response to the request which he sent to her through the maid. She had been little better than an invalid since that day when Stanley thrust his Heidelberg discoveries in her face. She knew the secretive nature of his mind and his contempt for his younger cousin, and she believed the last thing he would be likely to do was to take him into his confidence. She had not time to take more than one glance at the countenance of the young artist, however, before she realized, as well as if he had already spoken, that he knew all.

"My cousin Stanley," he began, "has made me the confidant of some very strange investigations and surmises of his, in relation to you. I can see on what grounds he puts his conclusions, which are very injurious to your character and standing, and even to the position of our ward. He believes you a criminal."

"Our ward, Rosalie?" she interrupted, trembling.

"Yes. He doubts whether she is"—he stopped for some seconds, overcome by his feelings—"whether she is really the daughter of Mr. Vandenhoff."

Miss Steiner pressed her hands upon her forehead, as if to relieve her overtaxed brain.

"Has he gone so far as to say that?" she said, in a voice that was hardly above a whisper.

"He has," responded Lysle, composing himself with difficulty. "He proposes to fully settle that question by further investigations, unless you are willing to give him the proofs he requires. Her position, her fortune, everything is at stake. He is a lawyer, and he cannot understand what motive you can have to conceal anything, unless you have committed acts for which you fear punishment."

"So he has told me," said the woman, slowly.

"And yet you have not given him the answers he requires?"

Her self possession gave way all at once.

"I could not!" she cried, in pain. "Oh, God! Why must I bear this longer?"

He found his feelings hardening, even while her suffering called forth his pity.

"That is equivalent to a confession," he answered.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed. "It is nothing of the sort! There are things that I cannot tell you. You might find them out, but if you did it would do you no good!"

"We are not thinking of ourselves," he said. "We are thinking of Rosalie."

"It would harm her most of all," she exclaimed, earnestly. "If it is her interest that you seek, you can subserve it best by doing nothing."

He could not tell what to make of this, but he

told her that Stanley was bent on probing everything to the bottom.

Miss Steiner leaned back in her chair as though too weak to sit upright.

"Has he still other suspicions, then?" she asked, weakly.

"Yes," he said, sharply. "You may as well know. He thinks you may have forged the will that you brought to America."

The woman sat up in her chair, with new strength that had suddenly come to her.

"I was very liberal to *him*, then, and I did not even forget *you*," she said, ironically. "It is strange, is it not, that I gave you so much, and that I did not give myself more?"

"Not on his theory," responded Lysle, quickly. "He thinks there was a real will that gave us more and you less."

So strong did she grow at this that she rose from her chair, and walked slowly up and down the room,

"Mr. Melrose does me too much honor," she said, after a pause. "I am, according to his notion, a murderer, a forger, a thief of a great fortune, not for myself, but for others. Is it not ridiculous? Did you ever read in the stories of crime anything as senseless as that?"

He could hardly help thinking that it was the courage of desperation that had given her this new aspect, and while he still dreaded an exposure for Rosalie's sake, he knew that it would have to come, and wanted to forestall Stanley, if he could.

"Am I to understand that you will tell me nothing?" he asked.

She stopped in her walk.

"There is nothing to be told that is of the slight-

est importance to either you or him! I have warned him, and now I warn you, that you will be sorry if you persist in going into the matter. It will harm Rosalie beyond repair, and it will benefit no one in the world. No, not even to the extent of increasing any person's share of the property left by Max Vandenhoff," she added, sarcastically.

Both of the speakers were quite out of their usual element. Stanley would have been surprised to know that either of them could show so much determination.

"I should be glad to believe you," replied Lysle, in answer to her last statement, "but I must admit that all the evidence points ina contrary direction. Now there is another thing to tell you. I am going to Paris in a few weeks, and I intend to take Rosalie with me."

She stopped again in her walk which she had just resumed, and stood like one dazed.

"Take Rosalie!" she repeated. "How often have I told you that I would never go to Paris?"

"It is not intended that you should," he replied, calmly.

Then her smothered wrath burst forth in all its force.

"You are shrewd men, you and your cousin," she said, drawing herself up to her full height, and looking down on him with scorn. (Excited as he was, he could not help thinking what a picture she would make.) "Take Rosalie to Paris, will you! You will not take her one foot of the way! Not an inch! Stanley has taught her to despise me, and you have learned the same lesson, but you are proposing to go too far! Take Rosalie! And to Paris! You! Never, while I am alive to prevent it!"

His admiration for the magnificence of her pose was intense, but he was lost in wonder at the sublimity of the defiance that she had thrown in his teeth.

"You dare us to do our best, then?" he said.

"Yes, or your worst! Whatever it is, it is better than submitting longer to your dictation! You will rue it, mark me! but if you wish to go on, do so! It is now your affair, not mine!"

"The first thing would probably be to put you under arrest," he said, bridling.

"Oh, no! The *first* thing would be to find some shred of evidence that would warrant a judge in issuing the papers, and that you have not yet been able to do! You would like to have me furnish you with it, but you will have to excuse me."

He thought a moment.

"You may be right," he said, "in relation to that, but I shall go to France at once, to discover the grave of Mrs. Vandenhoff. And this will not be so hard as you, perhaps, imagine."

She laughed another of those bitter laughs.

"When you have found it," she said, "be kind enough to let me know the location."

"If I do not find it, you will be under still greater suspicion, for you have admitted that you were with her when she died. I shall find the people who were with you. Since you dare me to this act, I must accept your challenge."

Her only reply was another laugh that chilled him. Was he really dealing with a murderess?

He went back to Stanley, and related the full particulars of the conversation. The lawyer nodded wisely, and said he had anticipated as much. They talked the matter over for an hour, and the decision

was that Lysle should go to France and pursue his investigations, while Stanley remained at home to watch the suspected woman. As Lysle spoke French so perfectly, and knew several of the best detectives in Paris, he would, it was thought, come to some decision in a short time.

Before the day on which he was to sail, however, there came a message from Miss Steiner that completely altered their plans. After her excited interview with Lysle she had taken to her bed, and was so ill for some days that a physician was in constant attendance. The medical man was not long in ascertaining that her trouble was largely mental, and he urged her to do something, if possible, to ease her mind of what was wearing upon it. It was he who brought the message verbally to Stanley, and it was to this effect:

"Miss Steiner says that while she cannot reveal either to you or Mr. Lysle, what you desire, she is willing to confide everything to any outside person whom you may select, and in whose probity and judgment you fully rely. She will answer every question you have asked or may ask, bearing on the points at issue, and give him proof that she tells the truth. He is then to report to you his findings, but not the reasons for them. I do not understand this matter at all, and do not wish to," added the doctor, in conclusion. "I only know that my patient is in a dangerous condition with brain trouble, and that this course would tend greatly to relieve her."

Stanley said he would think the proposition over, and he did so for a whole day. He saw that it might be difficult to prove all his suspicions before a court. If he could get her under the cross-examination of a shrewd attorney she would be likely to

compromise her case, no matter how cunning she might be. Who was the best man? He was not long in deciding that it was Luke Woodstock, if he would consent to undertake it.

Lysle accepted the proposition at once, when he was called in, and agreed in the selection of Woodstock. He was glad that some way had opened which might save a part at least of the unpleasantness inseparable from the case. He had just been out to walk with Rosalie, and the thought that her young head must be troubled with such a story as this promised to be, had given him the greatest uneasiness.

Woodstock, after thinking the matter over, accepted the trust, and had a talk with Miss Steiner a day or two after. First he drew up a statement which he made both the Melrose cousins sign, that they would abide entirely by his decisions, and Stanley wrote out for him a categorical list of what he wished him to ascertain, besides confiding to him every scrap of information and suspicion that he had. The questions were nearly a hundred in number and framed to meet every possible exigency.

Miss Steiner was closeted with the referee an hour each day for nearly a week, the physician not being willing that she should be submitted to more lengthy trials, and at the end of that time Mr. Woodstock wrote out this opinion:

"*I find no reason for any alteration of the present guardianship of Miss Rosalie Vandenhoff, or for any other proceedings whatever, legal or otherwise, affecting Miss Janet Steiner. This decision has been arrived at by means of indisputable documents.*"

Stanley was very much disappointed when he received these lines, and enclosed them in a note which he sent to his cousin. Lysle read them twice before he could believe his eyes, and then big tears of overwhelming joy rolled down his cheeks.

CHAPTER XX.

"YOU MUST GO WITH ME."

The very first time that Lysle met Miss Steiner after the report of the lawyer, he took occasion to tender her an apology for the things he had said at their last interview. He was very frank about it, saying that he had felt himself right on that occasion, and had nothing to reproach himself with, as far as he had then understood his duty. But the report of Mr. Woodstock had put an entirely different aspect on the case, and he had no wish to seek further enlightenment. Miss Steiner heard him quietly. She was not the same woman in appearance that she had been during those years when he had hitherto known her. Ill as she was still, she had a new erectness and an air of condescension as she listened to him, that put him somewhat out of ease.

"I am going back to France soon," he said, "not, as before, to seek information about your history, but to attend to business of my own. I cannot tell how long I shall remain, but I trust there will be no more dissentions between us."

"There has never been need of any," was her

reply. "I did all I could to avoid it for a dozen years, by allowing Mr. Melrose to treat me as he pleased. He can never do it again, though! I shall exercise my full rights from this time on, and, if there is trouble on that account it will be of his making."

There was great determination in the pale face of the woman, and Lysle felt that there would be almost sure to be a collision between her and Stanley before he was out of sight of land.

"I will tell Stanley of your position," he said, "and urge him to give you no cause of offence. I should dread more than anything the effect of any difference between you on the mind of our ward. Rosalie is already affected by the change that she has found in my cousin since his return, and it will be very injurious to her if it goes any further. She has been with me a great deal, as you know, since that happened, and I have had occasion to notice the despondent ways into which she has fallen. I hope you will do what you can to shield her from all unhappiness."

Miss Steiner was considerably older than the artist, and this fact was brought home to him in the crushing look with which she met his suggestion.

"I will take care of her," was the haughty reply. "I think I may consider myself as well fitted for the task as a schemer after her fortune, like Mr. Melrose, or a painter of nude figures, like you!"

He started as though she had struck him.

"I am an artist!" he exclaimed, proudly. "In the practice of my art I have occasionally drawn from the nude body. But if you mean to insinuate that I have ever—under any circumstances—lowered my profession or myself [illegible] state that which is

totally without foundation. I am a gentleman, Miss Steiner, and I will not permit any person to slander me!"

So he could be aroused on occasion, could he? She was as much astonished at his manner as he had been at hers, that other day.

"Never mind," was her calm answer. "You are the best judge of your own character. You must remember, however, that I am not the first one of this trio of guardians to make insinuations. You and your cousin began it, and you went much further than I have thought of doing. But on one point you may set your mind at rest. Rosalie will be quite safe in my hands. She has had enough of masculine methods, and it will be to her advantage to spend a little time in the company of persons of her own sex. A pleasant voyage to you. If your business there presses, do not hasten back under any impression that your ward will suffer. I assure you she will have the best of care."

Lysle could not help feeling the caustic sarcasm that underlaid these words.

"I shall not answer you in a similar vein to that which you have assumed," he said. "Rosalie is no ordinary girl. It is a perilous time with her now, approaching fourteen as she is, and her entire life may be moulded out of her experiences with the world in the next few years. I shall come back, at the latest, in a few months, not with any intention of interfering with you, but to see, as it is my right to see, that she has the sort of education that she needs, both in mind and heart. For it is not enough that a girl should receive a mere technical training. She should be educated in the guidance of her impulses and the disposition of her affections. A

young woman may have passed through the best schools, but if she has come out of them all without tenderness for others, she has wasted her time and laid the foundation of a joyless existence."

She had never heard him speak like that, and was much surprised to find that it was in him.

"You speak like a text-book," was her comment. "How can you know anything whatever about the mind of a young girl?"

His eyes filled with tears that he could not control.

"Do not make a cynic of her!" he exclaimed, earnestly. "You have had something in your own experience that has made the world seem dreary. Do not teach her that there is no sunshine, because you have known too much of cloud. She has a bright mind, a clear perception, a loving nature. Do not crush out her nobler instincts while they are putting forth their tendrils!"

The first letter that he wrote home was to Rosalie, giving an account of his journey, and expressing the hope that she had been happy since he went away. The second was to Stanley, and it contained this paragraph:

"A very annoying thing has happened since I left Paris. Some rascal has broken into my studio, through the skylight, and committed several depredations. The worst is the mutilation of my great painting, 'The Angry Woman,' which has been slashed with a knife into ribbons, apparently in mere wantonness. My nude study, 'The Sleeping Girl,' has been cut bodily out of its frame and carried away. I have informed the police of the affair, but as it may have occurred any time within a number of months, there is little chance of apprehending the

perpetrator. He cannot have sold the picture he took away, or the fact would have become known, as my work is recognizable by any artist or dealer. Take it altogether it is very strange piece of business. I shall try to copy the 'Angry Woman,' but I much fear I cannot make it equal the original. Although I would not have sold either of them, it is something to remember that I was offered forty thousand francs for one, and twenty-five thousand for the other last year."

Stanley felt that Arthur Peck must have done this work, but there were other things that were troubling him just then. He had made several very unfortunate turns in the Street, and a large slice of his fortune had disappeared with a celerity that was anything but gratifying. He had lost his first jury case; he had failed to be admitted to a pool that was destined, he knew, to clear a big sum in Harlem lots; and now came this slump in stocks which he had thought surely booked for a ten-point rise. He had intended to renew his old relations with Rosalie after Lysle left, for he realized that, unless he did so, she would have no advisor but Miss Steiner, whom he had begun to fear as much as he had once despised. The woman sat at the table with him now, not as a shrinking suppliant for his mercy, but like a queen of her own realms who did not intend to brook any unwarranted interference with her prerogatives. He had meant to claim his share of Rosalie's time, even though he felt that the girl had lost her old sentiment in regard to him, but these business troubles changed everything. He had too much to do without bothering with a child and an old maid, as he contemptuously designated them in his

thoughts. In the annoyance of his difficulties, he forgot that Rosalie wore long skirts, and that her fourteenth birthday had come and gone.

So carefully had he covered his steps that only his broker knew of the losses he had sustained. To the business world he was as worthy of confidence as ever, and he set about recouping the sums he had dropped. Like many a speculator before him, his hard experience unnerved his brain and made him do rash things. Sometimes, to be sure, he made a successful deal, but oftener he met with greater losses. There came a time at last when he had no choice between declaring himself a bankrupt, and using a part of Rosalie's fortune to save himself from ruin.

He thought it all over for days before he decided upon the latter alternative. He had invested some of her money with his own in several things that he considered perfectly safe, and which had undergone a depreciation, notably stock in the Alma gold mine in Colorado. If his failure were announced, the effect would be bad, both on her interests and on those of others whose trustee he had become. He argued to himself, with that sophistry which comes so easily to the man in a tight place, that it would be better to risk a little more of Rosalie's money than to lose what he had already put in. He had been mistaken before, but this time he had a sure "tip."

The decision was acted upon, and the result was as he had forecasted. Both their investments were saved. Stanley took a good deal of praise to himself as he thought over his action in this matter. He really believed he had done a very creditable thing.

It was shortly after this that he rose from the table one evening, and remarked to Rosalie:

"You may get your hat. I am going out for a short walk with you."

The girl's temper was on fire in an instant. It had been so long since that morning when he lay a-bed and allowed her to wait for him, that she had ceased expecting to have him speak of going out with her again. Now it was too much to have the delayed invitation come in the form of an abrupt command. She repressed herself with a powerful effort.

"Thank you, I do not care to go," she said.

He stopped and looked at her. So schooled was she in the art of mastering emotion that he could see no trace of the tumult going on within.

"I *wish* you to go," he said, quietly.

"I said I did not care to," she answered, in a tone as collected as his.

A shadow crossed his face.

"You do not seem to understand," he said, raising his voice slightly. "I am going out, and you are to go with me."

Miss Steiner had left the room and they were entirely alone. Never before had he used that tone, and Rosalie felt all its indignity sweep over her in a maddening wave.

Rising, she strode to where he stood.

"How *dare* you address me like that!" she said, flashing her angry eyes at him. "I tell you I will *not* go! It is *you* who do not understand! Listen, then! *I will* NOT *go!*"

He felt a sickening faintness at the heart, but he must enforce obedience at whatever cost.

"I am your guardian," he said, "and I have a right to command you. You must get your things and go out with me."

"What will you do?" she retorted, growing yet angrier. "Strike me, perhaps? I—shall—not go! Why do you not begin?"

There are difficulties in the way of enforcing a mandate of this kind upon a young person of the age of fourteen. But this was not the thought that was uppermost in the mind of Stanley Melrose at that moment. There was something in the eyes of the girl that gave him the greatest alarm. He did not realize at first what it was, in its full meaning, but it staggered him from his equanimity. When he recovered sufficiently to see clearly, he found Rosalie standing there still, in her attitude of defiance, her every expression daring him to do his worst.

"I shall not touch you, never fear," he responded, trying to appear calm. "In all the time I have had the care of you I have never made an unreasonable request. For some reason which I do not understand, you have decided on the course you are pursuing. The result can only be to your injury; yours, and that of the woman who has counselled you to this move."

The flashing eyes wavered a moment, and she tried to understand what he meant by his insinuation, and when it dawned on her, she repelled it instantly.

"No one has advised me. For months you have treated me as if I were an inanimate object, unworthy of your notice. When you change suddenly and become aware that I am a sentient being, it is too much that your first words should be a cool request —or command, if you please—that I should accompany you on a walk. You have done without me for a long time, and you can do without me still."

In spite of her firmness of tone, her body shook

with the excitement under which she was laboring. It was the second time in her life that she had given way to anger. A moment later she began to sway, and caught at the table for support. In an instant he was at her side and had his arm around her, but she summoned new strength and threw him off.

"My little girl," he began, all his old tenderness and more returning.

"No, I am not your little girl!" she responded, impulsively. "I am no longer a baby, and you shall not treat me like one. I do not need your help," she added, as he made another movement to support her. "I would rather fall than have you touch me!"

Strong man as he was, these words took the blood from his cheeks.

"I do not know why you say these things," he stammered. "I cannot think that I have done anything to deserve them."

She was wavering in her anger already, and only too anxious to accept the olive-branch, but woman-like, she did not wish to seem to yield her position too easily.

"You surely forget," she said, "how you have treated me during the past spring. Until you went to Europe you were with me several hours each day. Since your return you have never been out of doors with me, and have sat at the table as if you were deaf and dumb. Even your library, where I used to sit all the afternoon reading, has been locked against me. Do you think I cannot understand anything? Am I to be thrown aside when you do not happen to want me, and then be picked up again at your pleasure like a disused toy? There never was a

time till now that I have questioned your authority. But when—"

She paused, trying to regain control of her feelings, which had begun to get the better of her, and Stanley said, very gently:

"You have been under my charge ever since you can remember, Rosalie. Did I ever ask an unreasonable thing of you? Have I not acted as if your good was my chief care?"

His manner affected her powerfully.

"Yes," she said, "until you came home the last time."

"And since then I have been very busy. And Lysle was here, and I thought he would do quite as well to walk with you."

"That is just it!" she exclaimed. "It was not that you wanted to walk with me, but that you thought *I* wanted *you*. It is all right. I don't complain. But if you ask me to walk merely because you think I want to do it, I have no desire to go."

He put his hand on her arm then, and she did not repulse him. He took one of her hands in his, and she did not try to take it away.

"Why, Rosalie," he said, in his softest tone, "I took you to walk when you could only go as far as around the block and back, when I had to carry you in my arms up the stairs, and your tired little head would fall asleep on my shoulder. I took you to the seashore and went into the water with you when I had to hold you up by the band around your waist. I put you on the back of a pony when you could not have held yourself there to save your life. We were friends and companions until you grew so large that I took advice—and wise advice I called it—and left you more to other hands. Before I went

to Europe I told you that we should have to turn over a new leaf upon my return, and I have merely carried out that plan. And now for that, you refuse to go for a stroll with me, and speak and act as if I were the worst enemy you could have in the world!"

She had relented, and the look that she gave him, as she raised her eyes, told him her story.

"Why have you locked your library?" she asked.

He started at the question.

"I have papers relating—to—law cases—valuable ones," he said, in confusion.

"I would not hurt them," she replied, in a low voice. "Are you afraid I will put them in the grate and burn them, as I did those others so long ago?"

He smiled at the reminiscence, and the recollection of it put them both into better humor.

"I did not think on that day that you would ever speak to me as you have just done," he said, reproachfully.

"And I did not think you would go for days without saying more than 'good-morning,' and lock your room so that I could not get at the books there."

"In a very few days I will have that matter settled," he answered, "and I will leave the key again where you can find it. And now, shall we go and take that walk, or not?"

She went to get her hat and they were together till after the clocks had struck nine. She was very happy. It seemed almost like the old time come back again.

Miss Steiner assumed most of the care of Rosalie now, but he managed to get an hour or so each day for their stroll. They were not exactly like the

walks of long ago, after all. Rosalie was older, and the hot words she had uttered, even though they had been so soon ended, had had their effect. He walked with her as with some young lady with whom he must preserve reasonable dignity, and was very careful not to say anything that might look like instructing her or even giving advice, as he used to do. That was of the past.

One day he happened to find Miss Steiner alone and he said to her:

"When Mr. Woodstock rendered his report on that matter it was agreed that I was to look no further into it, and I intend to be true to that arrangement; but there is one thing that I have accidentally learned and I think I ought to tell you."

The haughty expression with which she had so long met his glances was tempered by a look of apprehension, as she waited for him to proceed.

"No one else knows it," he went on, "and no one shall through me. You will remember that I imagined you the murderer of Rosalie's mother."

He paused again, and the woman waited. She hardly seemed to breathe.

"I know now that you did nothing of that sort," said Stanley, with great deliberation. "I know now —that Rosalie's mother—is alive!"

Miss Steiner gasped at the words and swooned. Stanley rang for assistance and helped to carry her to her bed.

Then a messenger went for the doctor.

CHAPTER XXI.

DEATH ENTERS THE HOUSE.

Lysle did not find Paris much altered. The group that gathered around the dinner-table in the Restauant de la Republique had changed some of its members, but the new-comers were of the same type as the old. The same kind of crowds thronged the boulevards, and ate their lunches at the usual resorts. Paris is a maiden who never alters her countenance. Leave her for years and she will salute you with as warm a kiss as if you had parted from her but yesterday.

The only unpleasant thing that he found was the depredation in his studio, an account of which he wrote to Stanley. The police, who were called, promptly pronounced it the work of an enemy, but Lysle could think of no one whom he had injured. Investigation at the shops showed that no one had offered "The Sleeping Girl" for sale. The affair was a nine-days' wonder, and then was shelved with other mysteries. The injury to the second painting was of far more account to the artist than the purloining of the first. He sorrowfully put the pieces together as carefully as he could, and set about the task of trying to copy it, but there were great difficulties in the way. The knife had slit through the features of the woman in more than one place, and it was not easy to reproduce them with fidelity.

Clothilde came in from her Raincy school, rejoiced beyond measure to see him again. When she found

that the picture of herself had been stolen, and saw the annoyance that it gave him, she had a genuine sorrow. She believed, as he did, that the person who had taken it away must have destroyed it, as it would be impossible to offer it for sale without proclaiming the possessor a thief. She felt that she owed Lysle a great debt for his kindness to her, and after pondering a long time over the matter, and shedding some tears at the prospect, she came to him one day and bravely offered to submit her body to his brush again, that he might replace his loss.

He was touched by the offer, and thanked her cordially, but he did not accept it.

"You are very kind, Clothilde," he said, "but you are not the same girl now as when you posed for that picture. You are nine years older and the curves of your body must have undergone a great alteration."

"I do not think I have changed as much as you imagine," she said, with a blush. "It—it would take you only a few minutes to see."

But he shook his head.

"It was a child's figure; I know it cannot be at all alike."

"Did not M. Jouanneau or any of his pupils preserve their sketches?" she asked, in a tone of disappointment.

"They would not do. It was not the figure alone, that I succeeded with. It was the beauty of the flesh tints."

"But the tints cannot have changed," she expostulated. "I am sure of that. If you would only let me show you."

Still he declined. And for this he had another reason beside the one he was willing to give her.

He remembered that Miss Steiner had alluded to him as "a painter of nude women." He wondered how she knew that. Surely he had never spoken on the subject to her. Probably, he thought, she merely uttered the words at random, knowing that all artists were so. There was no need of his doing it again, and he had no heart for it. The better way was to let the old picture go, and devote himself to something new and greater.

Clothilde found it much easier to obtain a situation such as she desired now that she had obtained a knowledge of music and of other accomplishments. She spoke English very fairly, having been taught by Lysle in a conversational way, and in a few days she was domiciled in an American household in the Avenue d'Eylau.

To Lysle's intense astonishment no less a visitor than Mlle. Suzette walked into his studio shortly after this occurrence. She had read in the papers of the robbery and the mutilation of the painting of which she was the model, and she came to see the destruction with her own eyes.

"I suppose you have no idea who cut those holes in my face?" she said, after a careful scrutiny of the canvas.

"Not the slightest," replied Lysle. "The police say it must have been an enemy, but I have none that I know of. Perhaps it was some envious rival, but there are too many artists in Paris for me to guess which of them could stoop to a thing like this."

She bent upon him a look of pity for his dulness.

"Ah! How thick your head is! It is plain to me as the sun. No one in the world did that but that miserable Monsieur Peck!"

"Do you think so!" gasped the artist.

"Think so! I know it! I can imagine him now, the knife in his hand, wishing it was I instead of a piece of cloth."

Then she told him that Arthur had attempted to kidnap Clothilde, and that she had put the police on his track just in time to prevent the execution of his nicely formed plan.

"But Clothilde has been here," he answered, "and she never said one word to me about it."

"Of course she did not. Neither would I if I were in her place," laughed Suzette. "She is in love with you, and would not like to have you know, for fear you would think her somehow to blame."

Lysle turned the color of fire.

"She is not in love with me!" he exclaimed. "That is all nonsense. I have only helped her to a situation. I have known her from a child."

"Oh, yes, I understand," replied the woman, roguishly. "You have paid her expenses at school, and she has been here in the house for months, and all from mere friendship! You Americans are the queerest men, to think you can pull the wool over the eyes of a Parisienne. But never mind. Monsieur Peck cut up your picture, that is certain, and if you find him you will get your other one. He has not destroyed it. He has kept it to remind him of the beauty he could not get in person! The wretch!"

He also learned from her that Arthur had been arrested and had in some way escaped punishment, but that she could learn nothing since then of his movements. She had now another lover, and cared little what had become of Peck, except that she would have been glad if he had come to harm.

"It is easy for you to make up for all the injury

he has done me in cutting this painting," he said, a bright idea striking him. "If you will give me half a dozen sittings, and pose as I tell you, I can restore everything. See, here is a new drawing I have made. I have done every part but the face quite well. Help me, Suzette, that's a good girl, and I will pay you whatever you demand."

She laughed, for she had a mind to grant the request, but she wanted a little fun first.

"Yes, that would be very fine. But imagine me posing here some day, and Mlle. Clothilde comes in? I would look nice with her fingers in my hair, eh?"

"It is impossible," he answered, greatly irritated. "She will not come, and if she did she would be only too glad that I was restoring my lost picture."

"Why does she not pose for hers?" was the sly question. "If I am to assist you to get this one back again, she ought to do as much for the other."

"I do not want the other," he said, trying to conceal the impatience in his tone. "This was my greatest work, and the only one I care about. You, of all women, ought not to say ugly things about me. You remember, when André left you, how I—"

"Yes," she interrupted, much touched. "I remember, and I will sit for you, Monsieur Lysle. When shall I come?"

In a month he had the "The Angry Woman" repainted, and critics declared that it was, if anything, a finer piece of work than the first one.

He wrote of Suzette's suspicions to Stanley, in his next letter, and asked him to ascertain whether Peck was in America, and whether it were known that he had been across the sea at the time when the picture was stolen. "You are a lawyer," he said in the let-

ter, "and will know how to ascertain these things. I am willing to pay all expenses of an investigation, if it is only to satisfy my curiosity. I cannot believe that Arthur would do so mean a thing, but there is certainly a reasonable suspicion, and it is worth looking into. I have been lucky enough to get hold of the model again, and my loss will be repaired as far as the injured painting is concerned. I do not want Arthur arrested or punished in any way, but if I can get the picture I have lost, it will please me very much."

To this Stanley answered, in due course of time, that he had communicated with Mr. Peck, Sr., and had found that Arthur was, at last accounts, in the western part of America. He agreed with Lysle that it seemed impossible that he could have been guilty of such an outrage, but said he would do all he could to find him and to learn whether he had been out of the country.

He added to this that Miss Steiner was very ill indeed, and that her physician had the gravest doubt that she would ever recover her full health. If she should grow suddenly worse he promised to write without delay. Rosalie, he said, was in the best of spirits, and sent her regards.

The next letter Lysle received showed that Stanley's statements had been none too strong.

Miss Steiner was dead.

"I could have cabled to you," wrote his cousin, "but I thought a letter containing fuller particulars would be more satisfactory, and there was nothing to make it necessary that you should come here any sooner than you would have otherwise intended. While we had been led to expect that this would be the outcome of her illness, the

dissolution was very sudden at last. Her body has been placed in the tomb at Woodlawn, awaiting a decision, in which you must join, as to its final resting-place."

Although there had been no very warm relations for some time between Lysle and the deceased woman, he was much affected by the news, and decided that he would go to America as soon as he could make the necessary arrangements. He bade good-bye to Clothilde, who wept at the parting, and as he held her hand he wondered whether there was anything of truth in the guess of Suzette that she was in love with him. He could not believe it, and he felt that at least he had not encouraged her, and had nothing to regret in relation to all his intercourse with her. He made arrangements for one of the other lodgers in the hotel to occupy a bed in his room during his absence, as a precaution against further depredations. Then he took the train for Havre.

He found a strange air pervading the rooms in the St. Nicholas that Miss Steiner had occupied. Nothing had as yet been disturbed. Stanley wore the look of a man who has passed through distressful experiences. Rosalie seemed frightened at the first touch of death that had ever come across her path since she could remember.

They told him the story in hushed tones. Miss Steiner had known she could not recover, but had not supposed the end so near. She had made a will, leaving Rosalie what property she had. She had sent for Mr. Woodstock again, and confided some instructions to him, the nature of which had not yet transpired. She had wanted Rosalie to be with her a good deal during the last few days, and had

essayed many times to say something to her, but had never succeeded in doing so. One evening, when the nurse returned to her room after an absence of less than five minutes, she found her lying in her last sleep. The end had undoubtedly been one of peace.

Stanley told most of these things. Rosalie was too much affected to say anything without tears.

"What shall we do about our ward?" asked Stanley, the next morning, when Lysle came into his office for a consultation. "She cannot live at the hotel much longer."

"I have been thinking of that," said Lysle. "I suppose the only choice is between hiring a thoroughly competent, motherly woman to take charge of her, and sending her to a boarding-school."

"Exactly," was the response. "Now I am head over ears in business—have so much to do, in fact, that I hardly know which way to turn—and I wish you and Rosalie would settle that matter between you."

Lysle was much surprised at the proposition, but after a little further talk he agreed to it.

"There are many good schools," pursued Stanley, thoughtfully. "I suppose the best of them are on the other side of the water, though."

"At Paris!" gasped his cousin.

"Not necessarily at Paris. There are splendid ones in the neighborhood of London, I have been told. I do not make any suggestion, but if you thought it best to take her there it would be a change. She has been gloomy here ever since Janet's —since Miss Steiner's—death."

It was so strange that Stanley should propose this, that Lysle hardly knew what to say.

"And now about the burial," continued the lawyer, with the manner of a man whose time is precious. "What do you say about that?"

"I do not know," was the answer. "She expressed no sentiment on the matter, herself, that you know of?"

"No, she said nothing."

"Perhaps she confided something to Woodstock, in her conferences with him."

"It may be," replied Stanley. "We can find out in a minute. His office is just over the way." He touched a bell. "Atwell," he said to a clerk who appeared, "run over to Woodstock's, and ask him if he can meet us here for a few minutes."

The lawyer turned to a pile of papers that lay before him and seemingly lost himself in them at once. The artist wondered at a brain that could go so easily from one subject to another, and could not help admiring his talented cousin, whose name stood for so much at the Bar and on the Street of that great city. He mentally contrasted his own accomplishments with those of Stanley, and thought the painting of a few pictures of merit was a small thing to have accomplished in such a busy world. Still he knew that each had followed the profession for which he was best adapted, and art and beauty had its place as well as stocks, bonds and legal documents.

Woodstock came in a few minutes. He was quite grave. Stanley questioned him in relation to his conversations with Miss Steiner during her last illness, but found that he had nothing to disclose.

"We were discussing—Lysle and I—the question

of where she should be interred," explained Stanley. "It occurred to us that you might have gained some knowledge of her preference on the subject—something that would guide us in selecting the spot."

Woodstock shook his head in the negative.

"Any one of the cemeteries about here will do," he said.

Stanley looked at him attentively.

"You would not suggest taking the body to Europe?"

"Why to Europe?" asked the other, returning the gaze imperturbably.

"She lived there for years, you know."

"Yes, and she lived here for years."

"She had friends there."

"And here also. I should think America the place, by all means."

He rose to go, remarking that he had an engagement, and Lysle walked out with him. At the exit they encountered Dudley Morgan, whom they were both pleased to greet. He had been for a long time now in Stanley's employ, but his duties were mainly indoors, and Woodstock saw him but seldom. After a few minutes' talk, the trio separated; but Lysle had not gone far when he felt a hand on his arm, and Dudley was with him again.

"Are you going to stay in the country long?" was his question.

"I don't exactly know," said Lysle, thinking of the London school proposition.

"I wanted to see you and have a good long talk before you went," said Dudley, rather confused.

"About anything in particular? I am liable to go very suddenly. How are you getting along with

Stanley? You seem to have suited each other, judging by the length of time you stay. And you are now a full-fledged member of the bar, I believe?"

"Yes," replied Morgan. He hesitated, as if uncertain what to say. "I wanted to ask your opinion on something, Lysle. If—if a man is trusted by another, and in that way learns secrets that are to the injury of a third party, is it his duty to reveal them, or should he keep them sacred?"

Lysle had never had a thing like this to think of, and he answered in an off-hand way:

"I should say it would be very mean of him to betray the man who trusted him."

"Even if the other man was betraying those who trusted in *him*?" asked Morgan, eagerly.

"Yes," said Lysle, "that is not his affair. "I think of all men I most despise a tell-tale."

Morgan winced at this, and seemed disappointed, and after a moment longer he said good-bye and walked thoughtfully away. As for Lysle, he had forgotten the question ten minutes later, and it was a long time after that he remembered it and understood its significance.

Rosalie was doubtful about going to Europe, but agreed to it instantly when Lysle told her that Stanley had suggested it. The rooms in the St. Nicholas were given up, and preparations were made for departure. Lisa was to accompany the travelers on her way back to her native France.

There was a good deal of hurry in the good-bye that Stanley gave them. He told Rosalie that she must write, and be able to give a good account of herself. He looked terribly haggard, like a man who sleeps badly, and Lysle warned him that he was working too hard.

As they were entering their carriage his eyes met Rosalie's. There was such pain in his gaze that she would have gone to him in a moment more and thrown her arms about his neck. But even as she hesitated, he disappeared in the crowd, and the carriage wound its way through the streets to the steamer.

CHAPTER XXII.

LIKE A SWEET DELIRIUM.

The crossing of the ocean occupied nine days. Rosalie was too strong physically to feel anything like sea-sickness, and Lysle had long since passed that unpleasant experience of the traveler by steamer. But the girl was clearly dejected during the first few days out. It was the only time she had ever taken such a long leave of Stanley, and Lysle was observant enough to know that she felt the parting very much indeed.

He wondered, as he paced the deck, what had made Stanley come to the opinion that a foreign journey was best for her. It did not seem like him to be willing to sacrifice his own pleasure in this way. Though there had been times when he had apparently neglected Rosalie—notably the long weeks that followed his return from Heidelberg—this had been compensated for by subsequent events. It was very strange that he should be willing to spare her now at a time when there was no visible estrangement between them. Lysle studied over this problem, and finally gave it up. It was too deep for him.

As they neared Liverpool Rosalie brightened. She felt that joy at the prospect of setting foot on foreign soil that most of us know so well. She realized that she would be much freer than she had ever been, with Lysle for her only present guardian, and that she would be permitted to do about as she pleased when she reached shore. There is something in the heart of a girl of fourteen that makes her long for liberty—even as the bird in its cage—and often the freedom gained is of no more service than it is to the innocent little songster. Rosalie knew that she could manage Lysle, and she felt as if the horizon had widened before her.

The result showed that she had not mistaken her forecast. When they reached London she requested him not to go to any of the institutions of learning which he had planned to visit, until they had thoroughly enjoyed the sights.

A fortnight later, when this had been accomplished, she wanted to run over to Paris with him, and see the "most beautiful city in the world," as he was in the habit of describing it to her, before she settled down to study. Her wish was law, and with Lisa still in the party, they crossed the Channel and took up their residence in the Avenue de l'Alma, from whence he showed her the attractions to her heart's content for the next month. But when he urged that it was time for another term of the English seminaries to begin, she showed no inclination to hasten there.

"I have studied, studied, all my life," she said, "and now I want a good long vacation. If you think it necessary, I will take special lessons here from private teachers, but I do not wish to tie

myself down yet to any routine such as that of a boarding school."

"I was thinking," he replied, doubtfully, "that Stanley—"

She tossed her head, though her eyes drooped.

"He has nothing to do with it. He sent us over here, and now he must let us use our own judgment. And we have decided that I am not going to any English school at present."

He was very willing to be convinced, though he had his doubts whether this would suit his punctilious cousin, and he met her statement with silence.

"It is nice enough for *you* to send me into a strange city, where I do not know a soul," she went on, "but for *me*, who have never spent an hour away from one or the other of my relations, it is very disagreeable. I will take music and painting, if you care to have me, and anything else in reason, but it must be here in Paris, where you are. I know I am a big girl, but there are times when I feel as if I were only a baby."

Where *he* was! That was enough to turn the tide in Lysle's mind. He decided that she should stay in Paris, and sent for Clothilde to live with her as a sort of chaperone. He engaged several professors in the branches she suggested, who were to come to the house on specified days. He hired rooms for himself in the same building, where he could be near enough and yet not too near to his ward. He rode out with her—and Clothilde, always with Clothilde—and made arrangements for furniture and cooks and all sorts of things, like a veritable man of affairs. And he was quite delighted, when he had written candidly of the matter to Stanley, to

receive a letter in reply expressing the conviction that he had acted wisely, and that the new scheme would be much better for Rosalie than the one first suggested.

Lysle went back to his studio happier than he had ever been. His brush seemed to feel the impulse of his quickened pulses and he began another series of paintings superior to anything he had yet done. Rosalie sometimes came over to visit him, and then —only then—his hand failed to answer the rudder of his brain. He was greatly afraid of her criticism, which she showered freely on his work, judging things entirely by fancy and not by any standard of art, for she had none. Once he threw aside a sketch of which he had had great hopes, because she pronounced it disagreeable; and another that he was on the point of rejecting as too artificial, he finished with the greatest care merely because she expressed a liking for it.

Of course she wanted to ride in the Bois, and he bought two fine saddle-horses and went out with her every morning. He could not ride as well as she but he liked the exercise, and kept up with her fairly well. Clothilde could not follow them on these excursions, but she went in a carriage with them, and waited till they returned to the entrance, where they resigned their saddle-horses to a waiting groom. One day Rosalie saw for sale two magnificent dogs, weighing about a hundred pounds each, and insisted upon buying them. After that they galloped with the great brutes at their heels, and sometimes, when she walked instead, she led them by a tether, and attracted the attention of everybody who met her, by the strength of arm which she showed when they tried to break from her hold.

Lysle painted her picture with these two dogs, at her own request. He would not have dared suggest it, having felt a delicacy since that day when she accused him of caring for her only as a model. It was but a little while before she became one of the sights of the Bois, which people used to point out to each other.

Clothilde did the best she could, but he soon found that he ought to get another companion for Rosalie, one nearer her station in life. He succeeded, by good luck, in engaging the widow of a French army officer, a lady of the greatest refinement, who had met with reverses that compelled her to do something to eke out her small income. Mme. Fleury was not more than thirty years of age, and had a beauty of face and figure that had once been considered worthy of remark. She was not sorry to accept the charge of the comfortable establishment in the Avenue de l'Alma, where she was nearly as independent as if she had been its real proprietor, and to guide the steps of such a bright young girl as she found Rosalie to be. Mme. Fleury had been through one of the best schools in France, and was most highly accomplished. She told Lysle, with a significant look of her dark eyes, that it was quite as well that he had decided to have his ward taught by private teachers at her own home. She had nothing to say against the average boarding school, as indeed she ought out, being a graduate of one of them, but—! She shrugged her shoulders in a way that might have meant a good deal, and Lysle felt as if he had escaped a real danger for the girl in whose welfare he had so deep an interest.

Rosalie took kindly to her new governess. Mme.

Fleury made some changes in the studies which her charge was taking, after due deliberation and a careful estimate of her tendencies in various directions, but she did not neglect her health. She was a good horseback rider herself, and another animal was soon added to the number that Lysle had purchased for her use. She never made the mistake of attempting to order or domineer in any way, but succeeded in accomplishing all that she sought by the mildest methods. Within a very brief time, Rosalie came to regard her more as a sister than as a superior authority. All these things Lysle related in his letters to Stanley, having a conscientious notion that it was his duty to tell him everything, and the answers that came—infrequent and very terse—always expressed satisfaction at the news, and confidence in the judgment of the sender.

Rosalie occasionally received letters from Stanley, too, but they always made her very pensive, and Lysle used to wonder what was in them that could have this effect. He wished that things were in better shape between his ward and his cousin. There was a mystery there that he could not fathom, and it gave him as much pain as it did her. In fact anything that hurt Rosalie hurt him also.

Two whole years went by in this way. The life at the house in the Avenue de l' Aıma changed very little as the months passed. Lysle lived partly in his studio rooms and partly in the hotel, but he nearly always dined with his ward and Mme. Fleury. He very seldom saw Rosalie alone. Once a week he had an hour or so of chat with her governess on business matters, and there was never any disagreement between them. He was well satisfied with the

way things were going. Rosalie was rapidly becoming a skillful musician, and she had acquired many other things that made her better fitted for the place in life that she was intended to adorn. Lysle was forever congratulating himself on his good luck in securing so good a chaperone for her, and in having her so near him in his best-loved city.

One thing is worthy of mention, as showing an odd phase of the mind of the artist. He had never sent to Stanley an account of Rosalie's expenses, nor drawn upon him for any sum of money whatever on her account. Neither had his cousin, in all this time, sent anything to him, or inquired into his silence on the subject. Lysle knew that Rosalie would inherit a large fortune when she came of age, and he had a dim idea that he should then render his statement, which he kept with scrupulous exactness. As he believed it his duty to send in a request if he wanted money, and not Stanley's to offer it unasked, he felt no surprise that it was never mentioned in any of the letters which he received from the lawyer. There was an occasional intimation from Stanley that he might pay his cousins a visit in the not distant future, and Lysle used to say to himself that he probably intended to settle the matter at that time.

All of Lysle's property was in easily convertible securities, and whenever he needed more than his ordinary income he was in the habit of going to his brokers and parting with a piece of stock or a bond at the market rate. As for Rosalie, she had never thought anything about it, and had only an indistinct idea that she had plenty of money, and that if she wanted anything all she need do was to ask for it.

There was but one thing in relation to her charge that troubled Mme. Fleury, and that was her disposition in regard to dress. Rosalie had never learned to care for pretty things. There was always a contest—a good-natured one, to be sure—whenever a dressmaker or milliner or boot-maker had to be consulted. The woman used to have talks with Lysle about this trait of his ward, but he was as much at a loss as she how to remedy it.

"I really hate to take her to a theatre or any similar place," Mme. Fleury would say. "She is a handsome girl, and attracts attention, but I can overhear the comments of the ladies in relation to her garments. If there were any way she could be induced to change—"

And Lysle would answer helplessly:

"If there were any way!"

The way came, quite unexpectedly, through the arousing in the girl's mind of one of the most unlovely of her attributes. While passing down the stairs of her hotel to the street, one afternoon, she overheard a young girl of about her own age make these remarks to another who lived on the floor above:

"I think that Mlle. Vandenhoff the dowdiest thing I ever saw! She puts on a good deal of airs with her saddle-horses and her carriages, but she wears the most frightful clothes I ever knew a girl to have. I have sometimes thought of taking up a subscription to buy her something decent."

The loud laugh that followed showed that the joke was appreciated. Rosalie was going out to ride with Mme. Fleury. When she was seated in her carriage, she turned a very white face to her governess.

"You heard?" she said, laconically.

"Yes," replied Mme. Fleury.

"Is it true?"

Mme. Fleury hesitated.

"Do I wear the most frightful clothes you ever saw?"

The girl was much excited, but it was an opportunity that the Frenchwoman thought she ought to take advantage of.

"You do not follow the styles very closely," she said. "I think, to be candid, that many people notice it."

"But I *hate* the styles!" broke forth the girl, passionately. "They are not comfortable, and they are not becoming! Is it necessary to wear every style that some nobody may invent in order to keep from being insulted! And she said I could not *afford* better things! I! I who have a large fortune and can spend any sum I please! Not afford it, indeed!"

Mme. Fleury had never seen her angry before. It was only once in a year or two that Rosalie's temper got the best of her.

"M. Lysle has spoken to me about it several times," pursued the woman, thinking it wise to clinch the nail if she could.

"He should have spoken to *me*," said Rosalie, regretfully. "What did he say?"

"He only said that he should be glad if you would conform a little nearer in your dress to the customs of the people with whom you will by-and-by have to associate. I think he would like it, too, if you would take lessons of a dancing-master."

"Ah, but that seems so silly!" cried the girl. "To mince, and bow, and turn about like a marionette! I was not brought up to do those things. I can

swim, ride, shoot or climb better than any of these dainty women who affect to be so much better than I. Why should my inability to dance, or my aversion to wearing nonsensical clothes make them consider me their inferior ?"

Mme. Fleury tried to explain to her that while these things did not make her less worthy than other girls they did cause her to be remarked upon, and that it would be wise, in her opinion, if she were to add the other accomplishments to those which she already had, and which were, without doubt, all right in their place.

Mme. Fleury, Lysle and Rosalie occupied a box at the Opera, shortly after, while one of the great balls of the season was in progress. They were well secured from special observation by the curtains that hung across the front of the box, but Rosalie could see the merry groups of dancers that covered the vast floor, and with her glass distinguish the elegant costumes worn by the ladies. As the music gave forth its bewitching strains, and the gay spectacle was at its height, the bosom of the young girl rose and fell with rapidity. She was experiencing an entirely novel sensation. Here was something that she had missed in the drama of life—something, too, that appealed to her sense of rhythm and beauty. It no longer seemed silly—this moving to the sound of that orchestra—it seemed like a sweet delirium She heartily wished that she were one of that gallant array, and turned from the sight with regretful eyes when her friends said it was time to depart.

" Did you like it ?" asked Lysle, doubtfully, for he feared very much to hear her answer in the negative. He had brought her in the hope that the effect would

be good, but she had been so still all the evening that he could only form a vague notion about it.

"Yes," she responded softly. "I do like it. I will go to the dancing-master's to-morrow."

"Not quite as soon as that," smiled Mme. Fleury. "You will have to have some suitable gowns first."

"I will wear them," said Rosalie, with meekness. "As many as you like, and as soon as they can be made."

Mme. Fleury and Lysle exchanged significant glances. It had all been accomplished so easily. Rosalie did not look up. She was thinking what that girl on the stairs would say when she met her in a dress much finer than any she had ever owned.

The new dresses were made and the dancing lessons begun. In this as in everything else, the girl proved an apt pupil. But suddenly she developed a love of fine garments that was nothing short of a craze. She wanted everything that she saw in the shops, and Mme. Fleury, becoming alarmed, had another conference with her guardian.

"You must give me a limit," she said. "Rosalie is like a starved child now, and wants the most costly things. I am willing to go as far as you direct, for I never saw a girl whom fine clothes were more becoming to, but the limit is for you to set."

"There is no limit," replied Lysle, with a bright light in his eyes. And he went down to his brokers', with another bond for them to sell.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"C'EST GAIE, N'EST PAS?"

The rage that Rosalie had suddenly conceived for elegant attire led her into extravagancies in all directions. Her only active guardian found that this young person could dispose of more money in one year than he had ever needed for himself in six. She had no idea of the value of gold and silver. She knew that she was heiress to a large fortune, and that she was coming one of these days into undisputed possession of vast sums. She never troubled her head about figures. Up to the hour when she looked down on the dazzling throng at the Opera ball, she had not cared for anything that could be called expensive. The matter of cost had had nothing to do with the question. Comfort and convenience had influenced all of her selections in the way of clothing. She had been a mere child in most things until that moment, as indeed she still was in nearly everything else. The fancy that she took for silks, satins, velvets and laces, partook almost as much of the child's nature as it did of the budding woman that was developing in her.

Mme. Fleury did not believe it wise to indulge her in all the wild notions that she conceived, but she well understood that it was not part of her business to tell Monsieur Lysle his duty in a matter like that. Whenever she hinted to him—and the hints were very gentle things—that Rosalie was spending a great deal more money than was good for a girl of

her age, his only reply was that she must have whatever she wanted. He knew no pleasure so great as to sit in her parlor and have the girl bring her newest garments to him, or the fabrics from which they were to be made, and catch the sparkle of her pretty eyes as she gloated over the beauty of the materials, or the fineness of the workmanship.

There was nothing that she did not show him—for what was Lysle but a dear, good fellow before whom nobody could think of prudery? She brought him her new hosiery, tinted with the shades of the noonday sky or the early dawn, and told him to see what bargains she had bought at thirty francs the pair. She exhibited the high-heeled boots she had so recently despised, and called his attention to the fact that her foot had not grown too big in the old common-sense shoes, as one might have supposed it would have been sure to do. She showed him garters with jewelled monograms, with as much nonchalance as if she were an infant of four years. She developed a perfect rage for hats, and tried on one after another before him that he might pass judgment on their relatively becoming qualities. There were gowns innumerable, cloaks of all kinds, and an endless variety of other things that she would not rest content until he had seen and approved. And he looked at them all, and said they were very beautiful and very becoming, and that they certainly were marvels of cheapness. And he never saw one of them distinctly, because his entire vision was filled with Rosalie herself.

Used as she was to having her own way in everything, the young girl bade fair to go as far to one extreme as she had to the other, and Mme. Fleury could not help wishing there were some feasible way

to control her. Though but sixteen years of age, she had the figure of a girl of eighteen, at least, and she conceived a fondness for low-cut gowns and short sleeves that was almost terrifying. She seemed to feel that she had left her girlhood far behind, with her outlandish garments of the former era, and she wanted to plunge at one swoop into the "full dress" of women five years or more her senior. There were distressed moments for her chaperone when the question of a bit more or less of lace in the corsage seemed of the first importance, and it was hard to tell who would win the day. Rosalie had a most lovely neck and shoulders, and her discovery that this was so had been followed by a mad anxiety to utilize these charms with all possible speed.

"You cannot wear that dress cut so low without exciting unpleasant remark," said Madame Fleury. "You will meet no girl of your age with anything like it."

"I am nearly seventeen," retorted Rosalie, "and the dressmaker said I could pass for eighteen with no trouble. I never looked as pretty as I do in this bodice. I am going to show it to Lysle, when he comes, and see if he doesn't agree with me."

Madame Fleury grew desperate.

"I cannot imagine a costume that Monsieur Lysle would not declare suitable to you if he knew you wanted to wear it," she said.

Rosalie took a long look at herself in the glass.

"Can't you?" she said, softly. "*I* can."

"But it is not a question for a gentleman to decide," persisted Mme. Fleury. "I know that it would be considered unbecoming—"

"Oh, surely it is not that!" cried the girl, interrupting her.

"It would be considered unsuitable for you by every lady who would see it. The object of dressing is certainly not to excite unfavorable remark. I am not sure I should be willing to go to the theatre with you in that dress, if it is to be cut as low as you have planned."

Rosalie still eyed her shoulders in the mirror.

"Oh, well, Clothilde would go," she said. "But you wear *your* dress as low as this, and I am sure it looks very well on you."

"Recollect," was the reply, "that I am a few years older than you."

"That is the worst of it!" cried the girl. "I have waited so long to be somebody! Well, I suppose we shall have to put in a lot of lace."

"It is a little too low even for the lace," said Mme. Fleury. "Let me show you." She arose and began to put in the pins. "There, that is the very lowest it ought to be, and I should make it at least an inch higher if I followed my judgment."

They arrived at a compromise, finally, and the dress was finished. The evening that it was to be worn for the first time Rosalie came in to dinner with it on, as they were to occupy a box at the Porte St. Martin. Used as her guardian was to her changed appearance of late, he started to his feet in sheer astonishment when the new vision met his eyes.

Stanley had felt that Miss Steiner had taken away his child by the mere lengthening of a skirt. Lysle thought Mme. Fleury had substituted a grown woman for his late ward, and all by deepening the cut of a bodice.

"How do you like it?" demanded Rosalie with a saucy toss of her head.

His heart beat too rapidly and his breath came too short for intelligible speech.

"C'est gaie, n'est pas?" she cried, going to him, and encircling his neck with one of her half-bare arms. She wanted very much that he should take her side against Mme. Fleury. "Say that you like it, dear! Say that you like it!" she cried, coaxingly.

She had never put her arms about his neck before, nor given him any endearment that approached it. Nor had she ever called him by that epithet.

"You will paint my portrait in it, will you not?" she went on, with vivacity. "You have me as a little child, as a young person, and as a girl with dogs and a horse. This will complete the list. I am now a woman. Did you know that, Lysle, a woman! Am I not tall? And handsome? You do not answer me. Is it, then, that you do not like it, after all? I will take it off immediately."

She began as if to remove the garment, but he found his voice.

"It is very pretty," he said. "I—I was confused. I did not expect it."

She danced about the room in glee.

"Are you in earnest?" she asked. "For you know I would not wear anything of which you did not fully approve. It is not cut too low, do you think? What do you suppose Mme. Fleury said? That you would declare *anything* becoming if you knew I wanted to wear it! You would not do that, would you, Lysle? You are a good judge of ladies' attire, are you not?"

He hardly heard her. He was thinking what if Stanley should open that door and see her thus! He felt that his complaisant cousin would protest

loudly against the freedom that his ward was allowed. But for himself, he did not know how to say "no" to her. If she was happy, it was all he cared.

Madame Fleury came in at this moment.

"He likes it!" exclaimed Rosalie, before her governess could speak. "He says it is very *chic*, and that I am charming in it!"

The Frenchwoman had taken in the expression on the face of the young guardian at the same time that she heard these words. She knew that he would have preferred a more extensive covering to those shoulders, and she wondered what he would have thought had the dress been finished after the pattern that the girl had selected. But she had the wisdom to smile on both simultaneously, and to remark that no one would question the judgment of Monsieur Lysle.

The ménu had no charms for the artist. He saw nothing but his ward, and yet he avoided looking at her as he had never done before. He thought of the sittings she was to give him, in that costume, for he intended fully to accede to her request at the earliest opportunity. What a magnificent picture she would make! What a bud of just opening womanhood, a maiden standing at the threshold of the fuller life! For she was still a child, in spite of all her trappings; a child clad in the garments of one of her elders, delighted with the effect of the unaccustomed display.

Yes, she was a child, a child to be guarded more than ever, now that she stood so near the open portal.

Another year passed, and in February a grand masqued ball occurred. As many of the young acquaintances that Rosalie had made at the dances

which she now frequented, were going, she persuaded Mme. Fleury that she ought to go also. Lysle purchased a box, and bought costumes for all three of them, as they thought it best to be on the floor if Rosalie was to dance, as she seemed determined to do. The dancing-school which she attended was one of the most select in Paris, and the young people there were of the very highest class. Special preparations were made for this occasion, which drew heavily on the finances of her guardian, but as usual he uttered no protest. She had of late taken a fancy to jewelry, and many thousand francs went to purchase diamonds.

Lysle danced once with Rosalie, and then they all got mixed up in the tumult. Some of her young friends carried her away, and when she next found herself holding a conversation it was with a man hidden like the others behind a mask, but calling her by name, and professing to have known her for a long time.

"You do not recollect my voice," said the figure, "but I will prove to you that I know all about you. Your cousin Stanley, in New York, has lately declined to come to Paris on the ground that he has not the time to spare."

He had mentioned the one word that could have kept her talking with him; for, young and unsophisticated as she was in the ways of the social set, she did not think it a good thing to have too much to say to a person whose identity she could not discern.

"Have you, then, seen my cousin lately?" she asked.

"Less than three weeks ago."

"Is he well?"

"No. He is growing old and very gray. You

would hardly know him. He has a world of trouble on his mind."

She was fastened to his side now with hooks of steel.

"Tell me more," she said, "since it is evident that you can do so."

"Not to-night. This is no time or place. If you will meet me to-morrow at—let me see, shall you ride in the Bois?"

"In the afternoon, yes; at four o'clock."

"Alone?"

"Except my maid."

He muttered "Diable!" beneath his breath.

"It will not do. I cannot tell you anything unless you are entirely alone."

She wanted to know why, but there was no time for a long parley.

"I will bring my maid," she said, "but I will leave her in the carriage and come on foot into the Avenue of the Roses. If you are there I will talk to you."

He consented to this, after some hesitation, and left her.

"Who was that with whom you were talking?" asked Lysle, a few moments later, for he had spied the mask and failed to recognize him as one of those who had hitherto been paying court to Rosalie.

"He said he was an American," was her reply, "and that he knew Stanley."

Lysle did not fancy this, and determined to have an eye kept on the man. He judged from the reticence which Rosalie showed that there had been something to the conversation of more moment than this mere announcement. He had no intention of catechizing her, and he doubted his ability to do it successfully, in case there were anything which she

did not wish to reveal. But he knew there were ways in Paris to discover things, and he put one of them in practice. Before he left the ball he arranged with a detective to follow the strange American and report what he could learn of him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ARTHUR PECK'S REVENGE.

The next morning Rosalie repented of the agreement she had made to meet the strange man in the Avenue of the Roses. She began to think that it was a decidedly improper step to take, and she could see no reason for this secrecy upon a matter which ought apparently to be entirely above board. Lysle had slept at the hotel, and like herself rose late. He came in to see how she had passed the night, and she told him all about the matter, with perfect freedom.

"You remember the man who was talking to me last night, Lysle; the one you asked about, and whom I said claimed to be an American?"

"Yes," he replied, with a slight start. He wondered what report his detective would bring in relation to him.

"I promised to meet him in the Bois this afternoon," she proceeded, in the most matter-of-fact way, "and—"

He sprang from his chair as if to ward off from her some vital danger.

"Promised to meet him!" he repeated, almost with a scream.

"Why, yes, only in one of the avenues," she replied, shocked at the effect the announcement had had upon him, and not at all comprehending the reason. "He said he had seen Stanley three weeks ago," she proceeded, in explanation, "and wanted to tell me something about him which there was not time to tell at the ball. I said I would meet him there at four to-day, but I have changed my mind. I shall send Clothilde instead, to say that I do not think it quite proper."

Never had he felt so thoroughly how inadequate he was to carry out the part he had assumed, how totally incompetent to guide these young feet in the path they ought to tread.

"I am surprised," he began, with all the dignity that he could summon, "to hear that you thought even for an instant of doing such a rash thing. Do you not know that a young girl must not speak to a gentleman under any circumstances without a formal introduction?"

She laughed at his earnestness.

"He addressed me first, you will remember, and it was introduction enough when he spoke the name of Stanley. And what do you think he said, Lysle? That Stanley was looking very old, and that his hair had turned gray!"

The sweet voice faltered and the laugh around her mouth gave way to a tremor, while tears fell from her eyes. If there was anything needed to complete the demoralization of her young guardian, this was sufficient.

"We ought to go over and see him," she went on, when she recovered herself a little. "I have thought

of it for a long time. It seems cruel to neglect him as we have been doing. He is too busy with his thousand affairs to come here, but there is no reason why we cannot pay him a visit. I am really ashamed that I have neglected to tell you how I felt, but I have hoped that he would soon find time to come to Europe. We shall go to see him, Lysle, shall we not?"

He assented without a word of opposition, as he would had she asked to go to Kamschatka. But he thought he must summon courage to talk to her a little longer about the reckless promise she had made to meet the stranger.

"You will never make such an agreement as that again, will you?" he said. "It would have distressed me beyond measure had you carried it out. I do not know how to state the case as strongly as I feel it."

She came over and put her hand on his mouth.

"There! I didn't do it, and there is no more to be said. Clothilde will go and tell him why I did not come. If we are going to America we can soon find out all he could have told me. When shall we start? I hope we shall lose no time. I shall have to get very few things. We shall not need to take Mme. Fleury. Probably we shall return in six weeks. Shall we write him that we are coming? No, it will be nicer to surprise him, don't you think so?"

And thus she rattled on for an hour, until she had him in a state of complete mental confusion, consenting to every point she wished, no matter what, as he always did.

"But there is to be a change, Miss Madame Rosalie," he said, apologetically, to himself, as he

walked down the street. "Stanley will take hold of you again, and you will not pull the wool over his eyes so easily!"

The detective whom he had hired met him by appointment at his studio, at noon, and reported that the American was registered at his hotel by the name of Blake, with no occupation, and had, as he claimed, recently arrived in France on a sight-seeing tour. Lysle then confided to the man the fact that Blake was to be in the Bois that afternoon by appointment, and that Clothilde was to be commissioned to meet him there. After further conversation it was arranged that both Lysle and the detective were to shadow Clothilde and discover, if they could, whether the stranger had any sinister designs in view when he made the meeting with Rosalie.

Clothilde prepared to carry out the directions of her mistress. She went in the carriage to the Bois, and left it near the Avenue of the Roses, down which she walked slowly on foot. She wore a veil, and the American, who was watching for her mistress, stepped out from the trees that bordered the path, and came toward her, never doubting for a moment that she was the one he sought. Clothilde saw that he was about to speak to her, and at the same instant she recognized his face with a great thrill of fear.

"Monsieur Villemsen!" she cried, in a faint voice, throwing up her veil.

Arthur Peck looked as disgusted as it is possible to imagine, when he saw the fair Rosalie of his imagination transformed thus suddenly into his former servant. He realized at once, however, that he must prevent her from making a scene, or he might get himself into trouble.

"Stop your noise, you idiot!" he exclaimed, in bad French. "It is evident that your mistress sent you here to deliver some message. Let me have it, then, without delay."

Though thoroughly frightened, Clothilde managed to tell her story, with broken speech, and many gasps, for she was actually in mortal terror of this man who had once, she believed, conspired to abduct her by force. Peck's anger when he found that Rosalie had decided not to see him broke all bounds.

"You will tell your mistress," said he, "that if she cares anything whatever for Mr. Melrose—Mr. Stanley Melrose—she will not disappoint me to-morrow. If she does not come, at the same hour, she will always regret it. Don't snivel, dunce! Do as I bid you! And if you dare tell her a single word beyond what I have instructed you, I have men who will follow you, as they did before, and next time you will not escape them so easily."

Scared out of her wits, Clothilde promised and was allowed to depart, more dead than alive, to her carriage. But Peck had not gone far on his way back toward the city before Lysle and the detective stopped him.

"You will have to accompany me to the commissary of police," said the detective, exhibiting a badge to the astonished man.

"I do not speak French," replied Peck, attempting to pass.

The detective placed a hand on his arm, and detained him.

"He says you will have to go with him under arrest," said Lysle, coldly, in English, "and as he has heard you speaking his language to the maid it is rather useless for you to pretend that you do

not understand as plain a sentence as the one with which he has addressed you."

Peck was inwardly furious, but he did not know how much there might be behind this, and he resolved to control his temper till he found out.

"I am aware that you are no friend of mine," he answered, "but perhaps you can ascertain from this fellow on what charge he presumes to interfere with an American citizen who is walking peaceably in a public park."

"He says," was the ready answer, "that you have been guilty of threatening a French subject."

"Purely as a joke," said Arthur, trying to smile.

"And that you are a party to the theft of a painting from a studio in the Rue Dutot, some time since."

The accused party turned pale.

"I!" he stammered, trying to bluster.

"You."

The detective stood quietly, waiting for this conversation to end.

"Does he understand English?" asked Peck, in a low tone, seeing that only by the greatest diplomacy could he escape being locked up, a thing he had reason to dread.

"Not a word. You can say anything you please to me. Perhaps you will tell me in the first place what you meant to do with my ward?"

Beneath the calmness of the words, there was a deep meaning, and Arthur Peck was in grave doubt what to reply.

"I meant to tell her," he said, slowly, "where a certain painting was which I thought you might like to recover."

"And which you admit taking from my studio?"

"By no means."

"Of course that is not the true explanation of your conduct," responded Lysle, "but as the young lady was wise enough, on after thoughts, not to keep the appointment, we may let that pass. Have you anything which you wish to tell me?"

Peck looked at the set face before him.

"Are you going to let this man lock me up—that is the question?" he said.

"That depends. I want my picture, in the first place."

"You shall have it to-morrow, if I am allowed to go free."

"What do you know of my cousin Stanley?"

Arthur Peck hesitated a moment, and then said something in a low tone.

Lysle staggered backward ten steps, and would have fallen had not the detective caught him in his arms.

"I don't believe it!" he gasped.

Peck put his hand in his pocket and drew forth a letter. Lysle saw at the moment that it was in the handwriting of his cousin, and he felt apprehensive of evil.

"Read that," he said.

Lysle read it, read it again, rubbed his eyes like a dazed man, and handed it back.

"Keep it," said Peck. "You may want it."

"After all," said Lysle, as if thinking aloud, "it does not prove anything."

But he put the letter in his pocket nevertheless.

"You will find that it proves enough," said Peck, "if you take a journey to New York and look into things. He has evidently acted without much interference from you."

It seemed to Lysle as if he could not bear this strain a minute longer. He intimated to the detective that there was no need of detaining the American, and as they took their several paths he signalled to a cab that was passing and rode home.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONFRONTING THE DEFAULTER.

Stanley Melrose had indeed grown old and gray, and there was reason for it. For years he had been indulging in the wildest speculations, and recently he had been badly "squeezed" again by a combination of bigger and shrewder operators. As he had done more than once before, he had recourse to the property of his ward to help himself out of his dilemma, but the result had not been favorable. Rosalie's fortune had now been so badly broken into that there seemed no chance of ever redeeming it. Desperate at his losses, and with ruin staring him in the face, he devoted himself with redoubled energy to the task of making money at his profession, doing things that he would once have thought it impossible to stoop to, rendering enormous bills for trivial services, cutting down the salaries of his employés, denying himself ordinary comforts, and taking every unfair advantage.

But try as he could, it would not save him, and he came at last to recognize that fact. He had a good deal to do with the settlement of the estate

of the father of Arthur Peck, and finding that the young man was to come into possession of a great deal of money, he threw himself upon his good graces, as an old friend, writing and begging him to advance enough to save him from the ruin that was impending. Arthur, who hated both of the Melroses indiscriminately, and was smarting under the fact that Stanley had kept a sum in his hands much longer than the legal time, answered this request by a cool refusal, upon which Stanley threatened to make him trouble about the stolen picture, of which he assured him he had evidence to convict him. Nothing could have been more foolish than this, under the circumstances. Peck put the begging letter into his pocket, and went with it to Luke Woodstock's office. Luke instituted inquiries which convinced him that things were all wrong, and took the action which developed later in the arrest. Peck, thinking that he could use the letter to advantage in Paris, took passage to that city, with the result already known to the reader.

Stanley was heavily in debt, and it was all he could do to meet his obligations from month to month. He made new notes and got them discounted in time to meet those that were maturing; he raised technicalities to keep in his hands funds that came to him for others in the processes of law; he hypothecated the stocks and bonds of Rosalie's that he still had left, thinking that this was at least better than putting them on the market; and it all did no more than postpone the terrible day that was too evidently coming surely on.

No wonder that he grew old and gray and haggard. That bright future that he had planned, when he should be looked up to as the head of the New

York bar and a king of Wall street, had faded out of sight. The only question now was whether he would be able fo escape the penitentiary. He had stolen his ward's money. That was the only legal name for it. His motives might have been honorable at first, but he had made himself amenable to the law.

Night after night, when he could not sleep, he lay and thought of Lysle and Rosalie, and how they would look when the news was finally brought to them. He imagined the indignant flush on the white brow of his cousin, the turning away to hide his grief. He saw the countenance of the girl wreathed in scorn and anger for the man whom she had learned to respect, if not to love, with her earliest years. The men of the world, the merchants, attorneys, bankers—they would despise him, too. But he dreaded of all things the hatred of the young girl whose trust he had betrayed.

When Lysle sent that request that he should come to Paris, he would have given anything to have been able to respond. Had the fortune which he held in charge been safe he would have gone without delay, but now he could not look them in the face. She would be safe there, he had no doubt of that, and all he could do or say would be without effect when they found, as they soon must, that he was a defaulter.

It was a very ugly word, that "defaulter." He remembered addressing a jury once, when a poor wretch sat in the dock charged with this offense, and how scathingly he had pointed his finger at him as only fit for a prison cell. The jury had convicted the man without leaving their seats, and the judge had given him a sentence of fifteen years. Fifteen

years! He must be still at Sing Sing, wearing the convict's garb, eating the prison food, laboring with the common felons at the common task! And the proud Stanley Melrose, who had never taken a word of discourtesy from any one, might soon be sent there to keep his company!

Lysle was not long in getting ready to accompany Rosalie to America. He felt that he must know as soon as possible whether the intimation of Arthur Peck had any foundation. If he had been consorting with a thief, with a receiver of stolen property, he wanted to know it at once. He had no conception of the other things that Stanley had done to bring himself within the scope of the statutes against crime. He only knew what Peck had said, and that was enough to drive him frantic. Honorable as he himself was in the smallest things, he could not comprehend such a thing as this from a man who bore the reputation enjoyed by his cousin. He wanted to know if it was true. No, he wanted to know that it was *not* true! Until that was proven, peace and rest could never be his.

It was when they were on the sea that the idea first occurred to him that he would have to do something with Rosalie until he had interviewed Stanley and learned the truth of Peck's accusation. He could not tell her that his cousin was unfit to manage her affairs or even to have the slightest relations with her until he had more proof to that effect. And even after he had the proof—if it should come to that—how could he break it to her? He studied this over, as he walked the deck, until he thought he should go wild. A man who would violate his oath and use the property of a ward and relation was not the one to have any authority

whatever over the actions of a young girl. Lysle knew that while Stanley had not exercised his rights for a long time they were still his, and that being the elder and thoroughly versed in the ways of the law, he would be a formidable antagonist if a question arose which of them should rule her future. How could a mere artist, unversed in the most ordinary business transactions, convince a surrogate that he was better fitted to have charge of a girl and her large fortune than a man of Stanley's capabilities? It might not be easy to prove the theft of the property. Even if it were shown to be lost, Stanley could set up any one of a dozen defenses. He could say that it was done on his best business judgment, in short he could say anything, and his high standing would convince the court that he told the truth. There was something ridiculous in the charge, brought against a man of such standing. A jury would say it was incredible that he should have gone to such lengths to obtain a moderate fortune, he who had managed millions of dollars worth of property for others, and always with such rare fidelity and honesty!

He began to realize the difficulties in his way, providing Peck's story were true—always providing it were true. He hoped in his inmost heart that it was a complete falsehood, and that Stanley could explain that damaging-looking letter in some other way.

But still Rosalie must not see Stanley until Lysle had come to some decision in this important matter. And how to accomplish that in such a way as not to arouse her suspicions was the thing that puzzled him.

He had never told a lie in his life—not even a lit-

tle one—except the time when he did it to screen Dudley Morgan. He felt that he should have to invent one now, and he doubted his capacity to do it successfully. After much thought, he decided on this course. He would take Rosalie and Clothilde to the Barrett House and go in search of Stanley. If he was unable to clear up this charge on the first day, he would tell her that his cousin was out of town. That would give him time to think it over.

Rosalie brightened as they neared the shore. Lysle wondered what was the character of her thoughts of the one from whom she had so long been absent. They had been such attached friends from her babyhood, and then there had been this thing between them that was almost like an estrangement. He could see that she was very anxious to meet his cousin again, and he dreaded the future.

Stanley was not at the St. Nicholas. The clerk said he had removed from there some weeks previous, and gave him his new address, an obscure street in the business section, where a few of the old-fashioned dwellings of a former age still stood amidst the large, modern blocks devoted to the storing of merchandise. Lysle felt a chill as he climbed the narrow stairway, badly lit at intervals by the insufficient and infinitesimal gas-jets, for it was in the evening that he made his visit. There was something uncanny about the place. He wondered why his cousin had chosen such a locality to make a home in; he, who had always seemed so careful of surroundings. It prepared him somewhat for the change that he was to find in him in so many other ways. At last, having reached the top landing, he

discovered a door on which was tacked a card with the name of Melrose, and he knocked lightly.

"Who's there?" called a startled voice, that he did not recognize at first.

There was something in the tone that implied that visitors were not frequent, and Lysle thought it wisest not to answer except by another knock. There was a short wait, during which the occupant of the room seemed to be moving about, and then there was the closing of a door, and the turning of a key. All this took perhaps less than a minute, but to the waiter on the landing, it seemed ten times as long. Slippered feet finally approached the entrance, a bolt was drawn, and a gray head made its appearance.

Changed as he was, there was no doubt it was Stanley, and Lysle walked into the room without ceremony.

He felt a sense of indignation at his cousin for living in such a place as this, almost for having that haggard look and those gray hairs. What right had he to do these things, which were in a measure a disgrace to the family? The first look that the cousins exchanged was an index to the scene that was to follow. It was evident that there was to be no mincing of words on the part of the younger man.

"What are you doing in this damnable hole?" he exclaimed, looking around him in disgust.

"I—I have charge of the property," stammered Stanley, "and it is very quiet here. It—it is a good place to study—and think."

"And to invite your friends to, I suppose?" Lysle added, with sarcasm.

"No, I never have visitors. How did you find me?"

"By the hotel clerk."

"He did wrong. I only told him to redirect my mail here. I did not think he would send any one. Probably he would not have given you the address had he not known our relationship."

Lysle shivered at the word.

"What are you doing here, tell me that?" he said. "It is no place for a prominent lawyer, for a trustee who holds the interest of wards in his hands. I can not help saying what I think of your conduct. It is simply disgraceful!"

Even as he said this he wondered how he could do it; and he wondered too how this man, who was never in the habit of brooking criticism, could stand there so meekly and endure it. He did not wish him to receive it in this tame manner. He wished that he would reply in equally scathing terms, that he might even threaten blows. Lysle would have been a reed in the hands of his cousin, had it come to a mere question of physical strength, but so great was his sense of injury that he would have hesitated not a minute in risking the encounter.

"I thought I could live where it suited me," was the quiet reply, "and I preferred the seclusion which can be obtained in this district after nightfall."

"You have obligations," responded the other, "which should have prevented you from seeking such a den—the obligations of a guardian of a young lady of fortune and family, who would be disgraced by this act of yours, if it were known. And you need not imagine that it is not known. I would wager anything that it is talked over on the Street,

and in the law offices, and the ugliest deductions drawn!"

"What—what—deduc-tions?" stammered Stanley, with a frightened look.

"I cannot answer you. You know best," replied Lysle.

The pale face of Stanley Melrose turned the color of clay.

"You—"

"Yes," said Lysle, convinced by his manner that the story he had heard was true. "I have seen Arthur Peck, and he has shown me your letter."

Stanley, thoroughly crushed, seemed unable to make a front of any kind. He sank into a chair, and buried his face in his hands.

"What can I say to you?" demanded the other. "Thief!"

Stanley glanced up, and immediately lowered his eyes. A tremor passed through him at the appellation, and then he relapsed into his former position.

"Are you not a nice man," pursued the artist, "to have the charge of a young girl like Rosalie? How have you dared—"

Stanley roused himself to interrupt him.

"Wait! Have I tried in any way to control her conduct since I—since there was any question like this?"

"No," said Lysle, harshly. "You have thrown all your duties on me. But you must do more than that now. You must resign your guardianship openly. It is impossible that my name should be associated with yours after this day."

The gray-haired man rose and stood, the wreck of his former self, before him.

"Where is Rosalie?" he asked. "She—she did not come with you?"

Lysle bowed without speaking.

"She must not see me. It would shock her too much."

"Do you think she would *wish* to see you, if she knew?" Lysle broke out, hotly.

"Yes." There was something of defiance in the tone. "She would wish to see me if I were in a felon's cell. It is that which makes it the hardest for me. Can it be that you have lived with her all these years, and have understood nothing? Have you really been as blind as that?"

Lysle thought the walls were losing their firmness, and that the old building was about to collapse, as it should have done years before. Did he know it? Yes, he did know it. He had known it for a long time, and he had tried not to know it. Rosalie cared for nothing in the whole world but Stanley. That fact ought to have made him kinder in his language to this man, who had no other claim to his consideration.

"Stanley," he replied, chokingly, "I ask your pardon. Let me help you out of this. You are dear to Rosalie, and that is enough for me. But, for the love of God! remove your habitation to some respectable locality, and do not attract attention by further eccentricities?"

Stanley made a motion as if he would grasp the hand that was held out to him, but instantly drew back again.

"No, no! It is past the time for that!" he cried. "The less people see of me the better. I have made mistakes that cannot be remedied."

A conflict of emotion filled the heart of the artist.

He seemed to be back at school with Stanley. He saw the erect, self-poised young man, who could control, not only himself, but everybody about him, when he chose. He saw the young guardian, to whom the child Rosalie looked up as to a god.

"What shall I do," he asked, "about *her?* She heard—we heard—that you were growing gray, and that you were looking despondent, and she said, 'Let us go to him.' She is here in the city, and I do not know how to put her off. She has come on purpose to see you, but as you well say, she must not, at least until you are in a much better condition. I cannot imagine what has brought you to this pass, but the change in you is terrible, Stanley. Do not people remark it? Does it not affect your business?"

Stanley admitted it with a nod.

"It affects everything. But it will not do so much longer. I am going away—for a—vacation—and then I think I shall feel easier. I have worked altogether too hard, not given myself enough rest. I must—go—away."

"You must, indeed," responded Lysle. "Could you not go at once, say, in the morning, so that I could tell her that you were out of town? And if you could go without leaving your address, so that she would not ask to follow you—"

The lawyer looked up with a peculiar expression.

"I shall not leave my address," he answered, "and I will go in the morning, perhaps to-night."

"She will want to wait till you return," suggested Lysle. "If you could send word to your clerks that you should probably be gone a long time, on business of importance, I might persuade her to return the

sooner to France. Do you need anything for expenses?"

"No!" repeated the lawyer, absently. "I will write to my clerks that I shall be gone—a long time."

"Good-bye," said Lysle, brightening. "Forgive me for the harsh things I said, won't you?"

"Freely," was the answer.

"Good-night, then!"

"Good-night."

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN THE INSPECTOR'S POWER.

When Stanley was alone again he sat silently for some time, resting his face in his hands. Where was he to go? He had invested almost the last dollar of Rosalie's money—his own had been gone long ago—in the Alma gold mine, which he had thought sure to pan out handsomely enough to redeem all his previous losses. Nothing remained for him but flight, and the sooner he went the better. Perhaps in some distant land he might again pick up the threads of life and find peace. But, ah! How could he hope for peace when that childish face would be always before him, reproaching him for his broken trust!—the face of that little girl who had looked upon him as one who could not do wrong, and who was a fit guide in all things! He thought he should go mad if he dwelt on this subject, and he roused himself to

begin the work of packing the few things that he meant to take with him.

Another knock at his door startled him in the midst of this occupation. Could it be that Lysle had forgotten something that he wished to say, and come back for that purpose? He stopped in the middle of the floor, hesitating whether to answer or to pretend that he was asleep. The knock came again, louder than the first time. He must answer.

"Who's there?"

"I wish to speak with Mr. Melrose."

"The hour is late. Come to-morrow."

"My business is imperative. I cannot wait."

"Who could it be? Had anything happened at the office? Slowly he walked to the door and unlocked it. A man stood there, whom he knew well, an inspector of police, named Gallivan. Even then he suspected nothing of the true errand on which he had come.

"Well, Gallivan?" he said, laconically.

"You must go with me, Mr. Melrose. You are wanted at headquarters."

Stanley looked at him blankly.

"It must be a thing of great importance to call me at such a time of night," he said.

"Here's the paper," replied the man, handing it to him.

Taking it from the officer's hand, Stanley looked at it with dazed eyes.

"I don't understand it," he said. "Tell me what it is all about. My eyes are not as good as they used to be."

Gallivan took back the paper.

"It is for the Vandenhoff matter," said he

"Woodstock says you have been using the girl's money illegally."

Stanley caught the man by the shoulder.

"I am under arrest!" he cried.

"That's about it."

"And what interest has Woodstock in it?"

"I don't know. It seems that he made the complaint. You will hear all about it in the morning."

"And to-night?"

"You must sleep at headquarters."

Stanley shivered.

"In a—in a cell?"

"That is for the chief inspector to say. But come, we must be going. You can talk this all over after you get there. I have two men waiting at the outer door, who will wonder what keeps us so long. Just put on your hat and lock your room up."

Stanley complied mechanically. When they reached the foot of the stairs, a carriage was found in waiting, and the men stood there to accompany Gallivan and his prisoner. The entire party entered the carriage and were driven toward Mulberry street.

"You thought I would resist, evidently," said Stanley, with a faint smile, in allusion to the size of the force sent after him.

"Oh, well," replied Gallivan, "it is as well to be prepared for emergencies, you know."

Nothing more was said till the police headquarters was reached. Here the chief inspector, who knew Melrose very well, awaited them. The other retired and left the lawyer and inspector together.

"This is an unfortunate affair," began the inspector. "How did it happen?"

"Let me tell you at once," replied Melrose, "that I shall not say a word about the matter. I want to see my counsel, Mr. Dodd. I shall act on his advice in everything."

"Then you do not claim to be innocent?" asked the inspector.

"I claim nothing. Do your duty, and leave me to make my defense in my own way."

The chief inspector did not like to send his prisoner to bed without something more definite than this.

"I have known for a long time that you had some great trouble on your mind," said he. "You have grown ten years older in twelve months. I have detailed men to shadow you, for I anticipated that something would develop soon. Do you wish to know what they reported?"

"No," said Stanley. "I only wish to be left to myself."

When it became evident that he would say nothing more, the inspector had him thoroughly searched and conducted to a cell, as if he had not been for a dozen years one of New York's most prominent citizens.

At his breakfast the next morning Lysle saw the account of the arrest, headed by large type. He read it through, hardly able to believe his eyes, and then decided to go at once to Woodstock's office, and see what it all meant. Before he left the hotel, he called in Clothilde and gave her positive directions to see that her mistress was prevented from seeing newspapers till further orders. The girl, devoted to her master's interests, promised without question.

"If she asks you to get her a paper, buy some of the literary periodicals; say that the others are all

sold. Look out that she does not call a messenger herself, or if she does, give the boy something and tell him what to say. If that will not do, manage to intercept him. Do anything, in short, but let her see one of the dailies."

"Yes, Monsieur Lysle," responded the girl.

Woodstock was at his office when Lysle reached there. He looked up in the greatest surprise when he saw him enter, and rose to take him by the hand.

"When did you arrive?" he asked. "I thought you still in Europe, though I could not make out why my dispatches were unanswered. You must have started before I sent them. I did not know the worst till a few days ago, and even then I would have waited, except that I found him preparing for flight."

The ignominy that the arrest had brought on the name of Melrose was rankling in the heart of the young artist, and he was not disposed to share the evident pleasure of his old-time friend at the success of his surveillance.

"Whom do you represent in this affair?" he asked, with an accent of hauteur.

"A dead woman, who left me with a sacred trust!" replied Woodstock, impressively. "I represent Janet Steiner."

The other was silenced.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "how bad is it? Of course the morning papers have magnified everything, as they always do."

"That we shall see," responded Woodstock. "But one thing let me tell you now. Stanley Melrose is the greatest villain who ever lived!"

His voice was raised as he pronounced this opin-

ion, and Lysle flushed with mortification as he heard him.

"Do not forget that you are speaking of my cousin," he replied.

"I do not forget," said Woodstock, "but I also recollect other things. I should have told you when you were here before, some things that I knew. He is not only a defaulter, a forger, a thief, but he is, in the true sense of the word, a murderer."

Lysle could only repeat "A murderer!" and stare at him.

"He killed Miss Steiner," said Woodstock, in explanation. "Not with poison of the ordinary kind, but with threats and harshness. He came from Europe that time with his discoveries, and held them over her until she was almost frantic. When I was called in and learned the truth, he agreed to keep silent, but one day he said something else to her that drove her to her sick bed, from which she never rose!"

"There must have been great guilt when a mere word could produce such an effect as that," said Lysle, still thinking it his duty to stand by his cousin, before the terrible assault of this man.

"That does not follow,' replied Woodstock, "and in justice to her who is dead, I shall some time tell you the whole truth. It is better that you should know everything than that she should suffer from your cruel suspicions. You will then see how an over-sensitive mind could not bear the constant fear to which he subjected her. But upon the matter in hand, you are here now, and I shall be glad to take any suggestion from you, that is not opposed to justice for the prisoner."

A boy knocked at the door and brought a letter

for the lawyer, who tore open the envelope and read it at once.

"Mr. Dodd writes me that he has been retained as counsel for Mr. Melrose," he said. "I will go over to his office with you if you wish."

Mr. Dodd was found to be a very affable gentleman of middle age, with little of the appearance of a lawyer. He talked the affair over with Mr. Woodstock much as if it were an invitation to lunch or a contemplated visit to the theatre. He had already, he said, sent a clerk over to the court, to say that he desired to waive examination, as nothing could be gained, in his opinion, by ventilating matters before the police justice. He had had a long talk that morning with Stanley, who quite agreed with him in this opinion. While they were discussing these things a messenger came with the statement that bail had been fixed at one hundred thousand dollars, an extraordinary sum, as Lysle remarked to the lawyers.

"I charge him with having embezzled an extraordinary amount," said Mr. Woodstock. "I doubt if there is much left of the entire fortune of your ward, which he stated under oath at the last examination to be over three hundred thousand dollars in value."

"But what has he done with it?" asked Lysle, in amazement. "When he finds that these proceedings must go on, he will certainly give it up, and then none of us, I hope, will wish to be hard on him."

Woodstock contemplated the speaker with pity.

"Give it up!" he repeated. "He would like only too well to give it up, I have no doubt, if he could get hold of it again. The fact is that he has lost it in speculation."

Lysle heard this statement with horror.

"But he is rich," he said. "Surely he would surrender his own fortune to make good this loss."

"His own fortune went first."

"All of it?"

"Very nearly, I think. He has had a hard time in the Street and in Western mines of late. No, Lysle, your cousin has nothing left to speak of. He threw over everything to lighten the ship, but it ran on the rocks at last."

Mr. Dodd smiled as if to say, "This fellow has it right, Melrose."

"I will go at once and see him," was Lysle's next remark.

"Excuse me for mentioning it," said the affable Mr. Dodd, "but he particularly requests that no one be admitted."

"He could not have intended to include me in that prohibition."

"Excuse me again. He mentioned your name especially."

Lysle looked at the lawyer with distrust.

"I should like to know what other friend he has," he said, sharply.

Mr. Dodd turned to Mr. Woodstock, and they conferred for several minutes about the case, quite as if they were partners instead of opponents. Then Mr. Woodstock took his leave, and Mr. Dodd came back to Lysle.

"Mr. Melrose asked me to deliver this message to you. He says if you really wish to serve him you will manage in some way to get the Young Person out of the country as soon as possible."

"And leave him to the law?" cried Lysle.

"And leave him to the law. To be plain with

you, he can make no defense. He has stolen the money. As it is gone, and his own with it, he can make no restitution. His only course is to throw himself on the mercy of the judge, and get as short a sentence as possible."

Lysle walked up and down the room in distress. It seemed incredible that a Melrose could ever wear the garb of a convict.

"Is the case as desperate as that?" he asked, finally.

"Precisely," replied the smiling Mr. Dodd.

Lysle thought hard for a few moments.

"What will Rosalie say when she finds it out?" he said, aloud.

"It will be hard on her, of course," responded the lawyer, good-naturedly. "It is a great deal of money, and it makes it very bad when the whole of it goes at once. But Mr. Woodstock tells me that he has something for her when she is of age —money that Miss Steiner left in his charge. It is but a trifle, only thirty thousand or so, but it is better than nothing. He would doubtless advance part of it if it is necessary to complete her education."

Lysle had not been thinking of money when he made his observation. He had been thinking of the love that had grown up in that young breast for this worthless man, ever since she had been old enough to know him.

"Poor Rosalie! Poor Rosalie!" he said, over and over as he rode up Broadway to the Barrett House.

In response to her eager questions about Stanley he told her that his cousin had gone out of the city —to a distant part of the country, in fact—and had not left any definite address. His clerks, he said,

did not expect him to return for a long time, it might be months. The girl grew very sad at this information, and said little during that day or the next.

But luck was not with Lysle that time. Clothilde had managed to keep the newspapers away from her mistress, but she was not proof against the conversation in the dining-room. Two gentlemen who sat near them were discussing the case of the defaulter, and the words referring to Stanley reached her ears.

"I think it will go hard with him," said one of them to the other. "He is to be tried next month, I hear."

"Is he the same Stanley Melrose who made such a furore in Tallahassee & Lake Superior?" inquired the second gentleman.

"Yes, he has been considered a big man in business circles, but that's all over now. He will certainly have to go to Sing Sing."

Rosalie put down her fork, which she was on the point of carrying to her mouth, and turned a startled face toward her guardian. Then, rising, she walked firmly to the door, he accompanying her. They stepped in the elevator and rode to their apartments, without a word. But as soon as they were inside of them, she reeled, and he had to support her with both his arms.

He started to ring the bell for Clothilde, but she stopped him. Rousing herself a little she reached a sofa, and reclined upon it.

"Tell me what it is," she said, faintly. "Tell me all. You have been keeping it from me, but I must know. If I do not learn it from you, I shall from others."

He was alarmed at her condition, and begged her

to let him call a physician, but she refused. She persisted that he must tell her about Stanley before he did anything else. It seemed as if he could not begin, even after he made up his mind that he could not avoid compliance; and he stood there, waiting for the courage that would not come.

"He is in jail," she said, in a whisper. "I know that. What has he done?"

"They say—his accusers say—that he has—taken money not his own."

She stared at him vacantly.

"Stolen? Stanley stolen? It cannot be!"

He cast down his eyes, for he could not look at her.

"You do not speak," she continued. "Can you believe it?"

He waited another minute before he could answer.

"Sometimes," he said, at last, "a man is entrusted with large amounts of money to keep for other people and invest. Sometimes he is careless in his investments and finds the money going from him. Sometimes he becomes desperate, and tries to recover by speculation what he has lost. Sometimes the market goes against him and everything is swept away."

She listened with the utmost eagerness. The repressed manner in which he spoke convinced her that he considered the matter a very serious one.

"And has Stanley done this?" she asked.

"I am afraid so."

"Does he admit it?"

"Yes."

"How long will he have to stay in the jail?"

He thought her wonderfully self-possessed to ask

that question. Little did he know the suffering she was passing through.

"I cannot tell," he answered, dejectedly.

"Perhaps many days?"

"Perhaps years," he said, with a groan.

There was no use in trying to deceive her any longer.

"Years!" she cried. "Oh, no, not years! He will pay these people, and then they will let him out."

"He has nothing to pay them with," responded Lysle, gloomily. "His own money is also lost."

She lay without speaking for some time after that, when a sudden thought struck her and she sat upright.

"I have much money, Lysle! Miss Steiner always told me that I should be rich when I was a lady! Cannot he take that? He may have it to the last penny! I would rather dress in calicoes than that he should stay there in prison. Will you go and tell him, Lysle? Say that he is welcome to it—more than welcome to every dollar—if it will help him out of his trouble!"

It was becoming very hard for him. He could stand it no longer. In a burst of ingenuousness he told her all. Then he stood there, frightened at what he had done, and waited to hear the torrent of indignation which he felt sure would be the first thing to come.

"It is *my* money that he has taken?" she exclaimed, breathlessly.

"Yes, Rosalie, it is yours."

"Then the judge will surely set him free when I go there and tell him that I do not want it! What right had anybody to arrest him without consulting

me? Come, let us go immediately, and get him out."

Thoroughly astonished at the absolute indifference with which she received the news of the loss of her fortune, which he had supposed would give her such intense distress, Lysle could hardly answer. But in a feeble way he tried to explain that defalcations were more than the mere business of those whose money was lost—that the State took the guilty party in hand and demanded his punishment.

"I am not sure that your statement might not lessen his sentence," he added, as the only ray of comfort he could give her. "He will have to be tried, though, and no one can prevent it. Yes, Rosalie, Stanley has violated the law, and he must suffer the penalty. I should be as glad as you if there were any way to free him, but there is none."

"I must see him," she said, thoughtfully. "I will write a note and send to him, saying how sorry I am for his sake, and how little I care for my own loss. Then he will consent to see me I am sure."

She went at once for her writing materials, and began the most affectionate of letters. Lysle watched her with growing apprehension, as he marked the eager face bent over the manuscript.

"She does not comprehend it yet," he mused sadly. "When she fully understands it, and finds that he is sentenced to long years of toil, her poor little heart will break!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

"IT SURPRISES YOU, DOES IT?"

It does not take the world long to dethrone its idols. There are always enough new aspirants ready to fill the vacant pedestals. The young brokers of Wall street, who had looked with admiration upon the brilliant Napoleon of Finance, joked about his arrest over their noonday lunch. The newly-fledged orators of the Bar speculated upon his probable sentence as coolly as they had yesterday discussed the remarkable fact that he had lost two verdicts in succession. The stocks in which he had been most interested sank abruptly out of sight in the market quotations. The Tallahassee & Lake Superior Railroad bonds were considered not worth putting on the list after that day. Men who had invested in the real estate schemes that he fathered, got out of them as fast as they could. The Alma Gold Mine was admitted a failure. In short, all who had looked toward Stanley Melrose as one looks toward a weather vane, for indications of the prevailing direction of the financial wind, turned toward other vanes on other steeples, never thinking that these, too, might have their own gearing interfered with by-and-by, and be as valueless as his.

Mr. Dodd was quite right in his estimate of Stanley's chances. The evidence was most conclusive against him. It would only excite contempt for him to offer an elaborate defence, and bother judge and jury for three or four days. A plea of

"guilty" and a little speech in reference to the good character hitherto sustained by the prisoner, were the only things there was any use in offering. Stanley was lawyer enough to see this point clearly. Indeed, it was at his own suggestion that Mr. Dodd had decided what to do.

When the letter came from Rosalie, Stanley was much affected. He expected that its tenor would be one of reproachfulness, and he nerved himself for the anticipated execration. He had taken all that she had, and she would be left to the mercies of the world. Nothing that she could say would be harsher than he deserved. With these reflections he opened the missive, and when he read its contents—breathing only the sweetest sympathy, and assurances of her undiminished, nay, her increased love—he felt that a note of the other kind would have been less painful to receive.

"Let me come and see you," she wrote, "even if it be only to press your hand and to kiss your forehead. Do not say no. It is the little girl whose fingers you used to hold when she was too young to walk alone—the child whose hammock you slung by yours those summers at Cape May—who entreats of you this dear favor!"

At first he thought he could never do it, but as time wore on it seemed to him that he owed her this, at least, no matter how painful the ordeal might be to himself. So he wrote her that she might come, and named a day and hour in the following week.

The prison officials doffed their hats when the beautiful young woman presented her ticket of admission, and relaxed their vigilance so far as to allow her to converse entirely at her leisure, and unwatched, with her guardian. Lysle had come as

far as the office with her, and waited there till she should return. There was a great change in her since Stanley had seen her last. She was not the young person who had left him three years before for Europe. She was taller, and rounder, but that was not it. She was dressed as he had never seen her, and as he had never imagined her. She wore her best clothing and many jewels were on her hands and wrists. A chain with a diamond locket sparkled at her throat. Her hair was dressed in the mode, and every article that she wore told of the convert she had become to the prevailing fashions. But the same face was there; changed by sorrow, but still the same.

The sheriff turned the key and left them together. After taking the hand she held out to him, Stanley sank into a chair from sheer weakness. Rosalie put her arms around his neck, and pressed her cheek to his gray hair without speaking, for a long time. Lysle had told her he was much changed, but she had not been prepared for what she saw. The man before her was only thirty-four years of age, but he might have been sixty, if looks could count. She had known him as an erect, self-contained, even imperious man. She found him bent, weak and trembling.

"Listen, while I talk to you, Stanley," she said, at last, "for they will not leave us very long together. You must escape from here. I cannot have you go to prison for years and years. The lawyers say the judge will surely sentence you, if you are taken into court. You must not wait for a trial. You must get out of the country before that time."

The prisoner lifted his white face and looked at

her in a frightened way. Had the shock, then, turned her brain so soon?

"I know that you will answer that it cannot be done," she continued, speaking in a whisper. "The jail is guarded closely. There are bolts on your door and heavy bars on the windows. I know it all. But you can escape, if you desire, and I have come to say to you that you must do it, if you have any love left for me. It is not enough for you to say that you are willing to undergo your sentence. I shall suffer as much as you—even more—every hour you are there. You would not be so cruel as to inflict this on me, when I offer you the means to avoid it."

Still he gazed at her and said nothing.

"I have here in my clothing some saws and a long cord. You can cut the bars of your door—I have read of it being done in France by Gompereau, who robbed the Rothschilds. You have only to saw a very little each night, or whenever the opportunity is given you, and stop up the cracks with soap blacked by iron rust. I will see that the window bars are cut in the same way. This cord is very fine. It is to be let down into the street from the window when I give you the word, and a rope-ladder will be fastened to it for you to draw up and make fast. Then you have only to descend. A carriage—a row-boat to a vessel bound to a foreign port—and you are safe!"

She started to give him the articles of which she spoke, but he stopped her.

"My poor child," he answered, "you have no idea of the difficulties in the way of the plan you outline. The corridor is guarded carefully. The officer on duty would stop me—fire on me, if necessary.

There is no escape from here. I must endure my punishment."

But Rosalie had no idea of being dissuaded as easily as this.

"*Your* punishment!" she echoed. "*My* punishment, you mean! Do you think it is for *you* that I wish this? No, it is for myself. I could not live if you were sent to that horrible Sing Sing. I insist that you shall attempt this means of escaping it."

"And if I should be killed while trying?"

"It would be better than the living death they would condemn you to suffer. You are not well now, and a year in prison would be the end of you. But you will not be shot. I have arranged that the guard shall feign sleep and I shall select some dark night, when no one will see you from the street—"

He found himself listening to her proposal, even while its utopian character seemed growing stronger.

"How could you get any one to engage in such a dangerous undertaking? Your confederates would themselves be given long terms of imprisonment. Even you, Rosalie, would be liable to punishment."

"It is enough that my plans are complete. There will be no failure," replied the girl, with impatience, "if you follow my directions with care. I assure you I have arranged everything."

"Is it possible," he asked, "that you have managed to bribe one of the officials?"

"Yes, the watchman in charge of the corridor. Hide these saws and the cord, and move carefully. Their plan is to keep you here for more than a month yet. You have plenty of time. I shall rely on your discretion."

He hesitated no longer, but took the things from her and hastily concealed them.

"I must go now," she said. "It is best not to attract attention by remaining too long. I shall want to come again, and they must not think that I abuse my privileges."

She had said nothing about his crime, but he could not let her go without expressing his contrition.

"Can you ever forgive me, Rosalie?" he said, in a tremulous voice.

"I am so glad," she replied, "that it was not any one else's property." (There were others who had also lost their investments, but she did not know that.) "If I had as much more I would gladly give it to know that you were safe in a land far from this. But you soon will be," she added, brightly.

"There is one thing," he said, for he could not help sharing her hope. "In many countries they could arrest me and bring me back for what I have done. The safest place is the Argentine Republic. If I am to be put on a vessel it should be bound for Buenos Ayres. You will remember?"

"I knew it already," she answered. "But now I must go. Good-bye for to-day, and may God be with you!"

She rattled at the barred door, and the sheriff came to let her out. As she passed out the officers in the corridor lifted their hats again. There was only one of their number who dreamed of the plan that young head had put in operation.

She rode back with Lysle to the hotel, and told him how broken Stanley was. He was surprised that she did not seem more affected by the interview, but thought again that her youth was at fault, and

rejoiced that she was not old enough to suffer more deeply. The day would come when she would realize what it meant to have her fortune taken away, and then she would know how great a wrong had been done. He wished from the bottom of his heart that there had been a way to keep it from her, but Fate had decreed differently.

"There is a lovely diamond cross at Lynch's," she said to him, a few days later. "It is only two thousand dollars, and I am afraid some one will get it if I do not give the order to-day. You know how becoming diamonds are to me."

"Yes," he replied. If she could think of such things while Stanley was in such peril, all the better. He was glad that her mind could be diverted. "Yes, Rosalie, I will bring you the two thousand dollars to-morrow."

He brought it as agreed, and then she sat about arranging for the contemplated escape. By consulting the almanac she found that there would be no moon during the next week, until very late. She visited Stanley in his cell twice more, and found him still willing to try the experiment for her sake, though he would fain have abandoned it, as far as his own sentiments were concerned. He had sawed away at the bars in his door until the slightest wrench would completely sever them, and no one not in the secret had suspected what he was about.

"All that you want is quickness and noiselessness," she said. "Tie your rope ladder firmly and lose no time. Leave the rest to me."

Woodstock had promised Lysle that he would explain the whole truth about Miss Steiner before he left the city, and as he had decided to go very soon—

there being absolutely nothing, as far as he could see, that he could do for Stanley—he made an appointment one evening, and met the lawyer at his office. The story that he there heard astonished him much more than it will the reader, who has doubtless guessed much of it from the preceding pages.

"When I was called in to settle the matter between Stanley and Miss Steiner," Woodstock began, "I found a most distressing state of things. Before telling me anything whatever she pledged me to absolute secrecy, a condition which she afterwards modified so far as you were concerned, leaving me at liberty to relate the matter to you if I should ever deem it advisable. I learned that Max Vandenhoff, Rosalie's father, inherited a comfortable fortune and went to Europe to spend the income of it in the most entertaining ways he could find. He lived at Heidelberg for a long time, and it was there that Miss Steiner met him. She had been acting as governess for an American family traveling abroad, and her situation was on the point of expiring. Vandenhoff in some way secured an influence over the girl, for she was then quite young, and in the course of time the old familiar story was repeated."

Lysle could not repress a loud exclamation.

"It surprises you, does it? Well, it surprised me, too. But Miss Steiner, according to her own story, which I may add that I fully believe, went through a ceremony which he convinced her was binding. There is no doubt that at that time Vandenhoff loved her, as much as a roué of his description is capable of loving any one. They traveled together over a good deal of Europe, and finally went to Paris to reside. They were registered at the hotels as Mr. and Mrs. Vandenhoff, and there was nothing to

arouse her suspicions that he had betrayed her. These relations lasted for more than four years, when he suddenly took a fancy to a new face and left with his charmer for Italy. He then wrote Miss Steiner a note, which I have in my safe, along with other documents that prove the truth of her narrative, telling her that the "marriage" between them was a mockery and of no effect. He said she might go to his banker's on the first of each month and draw a stipulated sum for her support, but that he should never return to her."

Lysle could only ejaculate, "The villain!"

"The natural result followed. The girl was prostrated with grief and mortification. And she had a double reason for the despair into which she was plunged. For several months she had known that she was to become a mother. This she had hesitated to tell him, knowing, from expressions which he had often used, that the news would be most unpleasant, and having a great dread of his anger. When she recovered sufficiently, she wrote him the truth, leaving the letter at the banker's to be forwarded, though they told her he had left no address. She heard, however, that he had gone to Italy, and when no answer came, she went there to seek him. Tracing him from point to point, finding the trail and losing it again, she searched through Italy in vain, and the child was born at Naples before she could find its father. Recovering from her illness, she returned to Paris. Here she found that while she had been hunting for Vandenhoff he had received her letter, and had also been engaged in a search for her. He came to her rooms as soon as he learned she was there, and a stormy scene followed.

"All the upbraidings that could come to the tongue of a wronged woman were hurled at him. She called him everything contemptible and vile, and bade him quit her apartments. But the more anxious she was to be rid of him now, the more he wanted to repair his wrong. He told her that he was ready to marry her, and that he would have done it months before, had he known of the child's expected advent. He had gone from Italy to Algiers, and it was a long time before her first letter reached him. As soon as he learned the news he returned with all speed to Paris, only to find that she had vanished. Finally he heard that she had been seen in Milan, and he went there and from thence to Naples, only to find himself too late in every case.

"She would not listen to him. At last he had recourse to threats that he would take his daughter away from her, but she answered that an illegitimate child belonged, by the laws of all nations, to its mother, and that he could not have it. Nothing seemed to have the slightest influence with her. She said that as long as he had allowed her to endure this shame she would continue to endure it, and his child should share it with her. She obtained another situation, and began to earn her living. Vandenhoff seems to have had an attack of genuine contrition, for as soon as he could do so, he made ample provision for both of them in case any accident should happen to him."

Woodstock paused and looked at his auditor, to mark the effect upon him of this remarkable story.

"I do not understand," said Lysle, after a pause, "how he could have married her, even had she con-

sented. Was he not already wedded to another woman?"

"To another!" exclaimed Woodstock.

"Yes, to Rosalie's mother."

The lawyer started violently.

"Are you then so slow to understand?" he said. "Rosalie's mother was—"

"No!" cried the other. "No! You do not mean that!"

"I do," replied Woodstock. "I have evidence sufficient to prove it."

The artist seemed stupefied.

"And she went on, all her life here, and gave no sign!"

"She could do nothing else. It was a great error, as she admitted to me, that she carried her rage at Vandenhoff so far, but she was terribly outraged at his conduct, and it seemed to her that she could never be his wife after all he had made her suffer. He met his death in her room, where he had come to beg her once more to relent, and where the excitement of the interview brought on an attack of heart trouble from which he expired. This occurrence, combined with what had preceded it, made her the nervous woman you knew her, and gave your cousin the power he used to overrule her in everything relating to her own child. When his will was brought to her, she determined at first that she would refuse to recognize Vandenhoff's right to dictate to her even to that extent, but better counsels prevailed. The world looked dark and dreary, and she accepted the new conditions.

"After taking his body to Heidelberg and burning every portrait she had of him, she came to America, and from that time you know the rest.

Only you never can know the cruelties that your cousin practised on her when he got an inkling that she had a secret. He was a long time in finding out what it was, but one day, when she was in anger, the look in her eyes was so much like that of the child, whom he had also seen enraged a short time before, that it gave him the clue. He said to her, 'Rosalie's mother is alive,' and from that time the question of her death was only one of days.

"She could not bring herself to tell even a part of the truth to Rosalie, though she tried several times, for it was to acknowledge that her father had been a brute and she his mistress. I will say this for Stanley. He could not have realized himself how much pain he was inflicting. He did not know the terrible tension of nerves which had followed the death of Vandenhoff in her room, when she was engaged in a quarrel with him, and which made her mortally afraid of having angry words with any other person.

"By the strict construction of the common law of this State, which both Vandenhoff and Miss Steiner were living under all this time, they being merely travelers abroad, she was his wife from the first moment he registered her as such at the hotels where they stayed, and introduced her by the name of Mrs. Vandenhoff, as he did, to many people. I consider Rosalie just as legitimate as any child ever born after a civil or religious ceremony."

Lysle sprang from his chair and grasped the hand of the lawyer.

"Oh, Luke, I thank you for that!" he cried.

"There is no doubt of it. I should claim her property for her on that ground were it her only claim—but alas! it is all gone now!"

"There is nothing left? said Lysle, interrogatively.

"Only a bunch of certificates of stock in the Alma mine, which no one would take as a gift."

The artist stood for several moments lost in thought.

"Ah, Luke, if there were some way to save him!" he said. "It is not the loss of the money that will trouble Rosalie, but the disgrace and suffering of her dear friend. I may as well be plain with you. She is no longer a child, and she loves Stanley. From babyhood she has adored him, and now I can call her feeling by no less a name than love. She is trying hard to bear up, but when he is sentenced she will break down. I am sure of it. You must do all you can with me to make his punishment a light one, for the effect on her will be worse than on him."

They talked it over for a long time, Woodstock recalling all the disagreeable aspects of the case, and Lysle pleading for mercy, until at last the lawyer relented to some extent.

"I will promise at least not to press it against him," he said. "If you can get the judge to view this matter lightly, I will interpose no objection."

With this straw of hope Lysle went back to the Barrett House, to tell it to Rosalie. Instead of the girl herself, he found waiting for him a note which threw him into the greatest agitation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OFF FOR BUENOS AYRES.

It happened very luckily for Rosalie's plans that one of the watchmen of the jail where Stanley was confined had a sweetheart who was employed in the Barrett House, and who was aware of the fact that the young girl who had come over from France was related to the prisoner. It happened that the officer had recently tired of his situation and was only waiting till things came around right before he should resign and remove to the West, where he had an idea that his fortunes would improve much more rapidly. It happened that the only thing that stood in the way of his marriage and subsequent removal was the want of a little more ready money than he could at that time command. It happened that the employée at the hotel mentioned to Rosalie that her young man was one of the guards in the jail and had charge of Stanley every other night. And from these happenings it was not a great way to a talk between Rosalie and the girl as to the possibility of an escape for the prisoner. When they had exchanged confidences and the girl had told her lover of the opportunity for him to get the money he wanted, it did not take long for him to make up his mind that he would never find a better time to resign his position, or what was more likely, get his discharge from it.

The watchman knew that if his prisoner was found missing some morning, he would be called up and questioned sharply about it. If he allowed it to

appear that he had been indulging in drink, the worst thing they could do to him would be to dismiss him in disgrace from the force. As he intended going without delay to a new part of the country, it made no difference to him what record was left opposite his name on the books of the sheriff's office. Rosalie did all her talking with the girl, so that in case anything failed he could not be held responsible, and the bargain which they consummated was that fifteen hundred dollars should be paid for the necessary blindness and silence on the part of the guard—five hundred dollars down and the balance as soon as Stanley had escaped from the jail and was safe in a carriage, the girl to be on hand ready to take the money.

The night was selected, and every preparation was made. The bars of the outer window had even been subjected to the steel saws on a previous night, when a thunder-storm drowned the slight sound made. The story which the other officials were to be told was that Mr. Melrose must have sawed all of the bars while the watchman was under the influence of drugged whiskey given him by the prisoner, to whom it had been in some manner smuggled.

It was the blackest night ever seen. The hour was past midnight when the form of Stanley Melrose came hastily down the improvised ladder, which he then pulled after him, it being held by an endless cord, which he had only to cut at the base. The street-lamps in the vicinity had been mysteriously turned out. He found the carriage where Rosalie had told him to look for it, several blocks away, and in it the young woman from the hotel, waiting for her money. Stanley was disguised so closely that no one would have recognized him, Rosalie having

taken him the necessary articles in the various visits she had paid to his cell, and she was dressed in a boy's suit. In half a minute more the cabman, who had received one hundred dollars for his trouble, though he did not exactly know what the whole affair was about, was taking Stanley and his ward rapidly away from the scene of his late imprisonment.

They reached the river side in an obscure part of the city, and there found a man in a row-boat waiting for them. He had also been promised a large extra fee, but knew no more than the cabman what freight he was carrying.

Out into the darkness of the stream rowed the boatman. Stanley was cautioned to keep a lookout, lest they run into other craft, though it was unlikely that anything else would be moving in that Egyptian atmosphere. Rosalie lay down in the bottom of the boat, and from that position she talked to her companion in low tones.

"I have a little over four hundred dollars here for you, Stanley. It was all I could get after paying the men, without exciting attention, but when you get to Buenos Ayres I will send you more. You will have to take an assumed name, so that the people there will not avoid—I mean—suspect you. Supposing you call yourself James Holman, and I will write to you under that title. The captain of the ship to which we are going does not know your real name, nor why you wish to take the journey, but he probably suspects that there is something strange about it. The fare will not be very nice, I fear, and there is no provision for passengers such as the regular boats provide, but you must make the best of it."

She was eighteen years of age and he nearly twice as much, but in the present emergency their relations had changed. She was now a woman and he a mere child, ready to obey her in all things. He held her hand in his as she talked, and his feelings at the knowledge that he must soon release it, perhaps never to touch it again, were of the most painful description.

"You can get something to do there," she went on. "It will be much better for you than idleness, for it will keep you from thinking. And besides, you will be able to raise yourself to a good position with your talent, if you try hard. I have read a book lately about that country, and it says that there are many criminals—" she stopped, shocked at the words she had thoughtlessly uttered—"many unfortunate men who have come there on account of their—their troubles—and are now among the leading citizens. You are a very smart man, Stanley, as everybody says. And you are young, too, much too young to let this—this mistake—ruin the rest of your life."

She paused, thinking that he might have something to interject, but the man said nothing.

"Here is a little package that I want you to take and use when you need it." She handed it to him. "Be careful of it. I shall not want it again. It may be of use to you. Do not leave the Argentine Republic unless something happens which releases you from any danger. It is a sad thing to have to go so far from your country, but at least you will be free. Lysle and I will soon return to Paris. You know our address there. We shall want to hear from you very often—much oftener than you have written us before. As for us, we shall do very well. I have no fears for the future as far as I am con-

cerned. Perhaps some day we can come out to South America and visit you. By that time you will be, very likely, a man of importance there. I have heard of such things. What is that ahead? Boatman, is it our vessel?"

The boatman rested on his oars and peered into the darkness, where the hull of a ship was indistinctly visible. It was not the ship they sought, but an American man-of-war, and they steered away from it. The boatman said he knew now exactly where the vessel that he sought ought to lie, as he had observed the relative proximity of the two craft at sunset, and knew that both were anchored. There was little more for Rosalie to say, and she lay very still for the next five minutes, holding the hand of her guardian.

"Stanley," she whispered, at last, "we are almost there. I shall go at once back to the city, as soon as you are aboard the ship, so as to reach the hotel at the earliest possible moment. We must say good-bye now."

"Good-bye," he murmured faintly.

"Kiss me, Stanley."

"No, no!" he cried with a gasp. "I cannot kiss you, Rosalie! If you knew everything, you would not ask it."

She drew his head down in spite of his resistance, and pressed her lips to his cheek.

"Skiff ahoy!" came a gruff voice from a vessel just ahead.

The boatman ceased rowing and looked at the ship.

"What vessel is that?" he asked.

"The Silvia, bound at daylight for Buenos Ayres."

"I have a passenger for you."

"Put him aboard."

Stanley rose, and with the action of a drunken man, staggered upon the deck.

"Here you," called the captain, for it was he, to one of his men, "put this fellow into my cabin and help him undress. He has been taking a little too much. The boy's not going, too, is he?" he asked, turning to the boatman.

"No," was the reply.

"It's a dark night. You did well to find us. I was afraid you would get lost in the fog. The city lights will help you on the way back. Well, good-night, shipmate."

"Good-night," answered the boatman, steering his skiff about.

Rosalie did not dare to speak, lest her voice should betray her. Stanley stood there on the deck, with the sailor holding him by the shoulder, under the impression that he was intoxicated, but he said nothing, either.

Then the fog fell between them and blotted out the sight.

The first rays of the morning sun were struggling vainly to dissipate the mists that hung over Manhattan Island, when Rosalie landed again. The cabman was waiting for her, and his vehicle was standing a few rods away. She got inside, and as he drove up-town through unfrequented streets, she donned the feminine outside garments which she had left there. She did not let the cab go to the Barrett House, bu t left it at Forty-second street, near the depot, intending to give the driver the impression that she meant to take a train from that point. She went inside the station, thinking that he might watch her, but left it immediately by a side door,

and crossed through Madison avenue into Forty-third street, and then walked rapidly to her hotel. A sleepy lad let her in, surprised that a lady should be out at that hour. But he could not have recognized her, on account of the heavy veil which she wore, had he been ever so inquisitive.

Lysle had passed a horrible night.

Clothilde would not go to bed, though he begged and almost commanded her to do so, but sat up all night in his parlor, alternately weeping and lamenting that it was her fault. And Lysle paced the floor, looking impatiently at the clock as it moved with leaden motion around the dial, or threw himself impatiently on the sofa, in a vain hope to woo a few moments of repose. It was the longest night he had ever known—twice as long as any he had ever imagined—but the dawn came at last, and with it Rosalie.

Her tap on the door startled him, though he had listened for it so long, and when he opened it to let her in, she was struck by the extraordinary paleness of his countenance. In a second it flashed into her brain what she had made him suffer.

"Ah, my dear mistress!" cried Clothilde, catching her in her arms. "You are alive and well!"

Rosalie unclasped herself from the hysterical woman, and spoke with her usual composure.

"If you have sat up all night for me, Clothilde, you have done a very foolish thing. Go to bed at once now. And mind you say nothing about my having been out. Go, with no explanations."

This order, curt as it may appear, was said in a kind tone, and the woman complied without further delay.

"And now, Lysle, for my scolding from you, for I

see you are ready to give me one," proceeded Rosalie, taking off her veil and bonnet. "But perhaps you had best hear first what I have to say in my defense."

If he had formed some dim notion that he was going to speak to her of her conduct in a tone of severity, during those long hours of the lonely night, he knew already how unfitted he was to the task.

"Well," she said, after waiting for him to speak, "which shall it be, the scolding first, or the explanation?"

He began to fear that he looked silly, but he could not say anything appropriate, and he indicated that she might go on.

She took one of the chairs and motioned to him to take another. Then she said, mysteriously—

"Have you no suspicion of what I have been doing?"

He shook his head in the negative. He wanted very much to know, for until he did, the most horrible fears would come uninvited into his mind.

"Not a guess of any kind? I was afraid you would have, though it was ridiculous enough. How could you have suspected? Well, Lysle, *Stanley is free!*"

CHAPTER XXIX.

"HERE ARE TWO CRIMINALS."

The delight with which she uttered these words could not be concealed. She leaned towards him with her hands clasped together and her beautiful eyes luminous.

"Free?" he repeated, with a vacant stare.

"Free, Lysle! He will not have to undergo those long years at Sing Sing, to which they meant to sentence him! He will live in a new country where he will have no locks and bars to confine him! His lungs will not have to breathe the vitiated air of a cell or a prison workshop! He is at this moment on the open sea, where no sheriff can touch him!"

The more he tried to speak the less he could find words. He stared at the girl like one stupefied.

"The open sea?" he echoed. What could she mean?

"Yes, Lysle. I left him two hours ago on the deck of a South American vessel, with his passage paid to Buenos Ayres. Are you not glad? *Tiens!* You do not act as if it pleased you!"

He read the thought that was in her eyes, and it gave him speech at last.

"Glad, Rosalie? I know nothing that would make me happier. But how was it accomplished? You could not have obtained a pardon for him before his sentence. You must have assisted him to escape!"

She smiled proudly.

"Yes. That is it. I gave him saws to cut his bars, and a rope to let down from the window. I bribed an officer to pretend sleep, hired a cab to take us to the river and a boatman to row us to the vessel. Yesterday I engaged his passage with a captain who was to sail at daybreak. Oh, I did it all very well. It would do for Monsieur Gaboriau to put in a novel. See!"

She unbuttoned her long dress and showed him the boy's suit that she had on beneath it, telling him how she had changed the clothing in the cab, and the

rest of her strange adventures. Now that they were accomplished, she seemed only to think of the amusing element in them, and rattled on with many a laugh until she came to her parting with Stanley at the ship's side.

"Ah, Lysle, that was terrible!" she exclaimed, dropping her happy tone and wiping genuine tears from her eyes. "He hardly answered anything that I said to him, all the time we were in the cab and boat, and he staggered so when he gained the deck that the captain thought he had been drinking. I shall never forget him standing there with that hopeless look, as my boat was rowed away. Oh, Lysle, Lysle, how sorry I am for him!"

She burst into sobs that shook her frame, and the helpless fellow did not know of any way to comfort her. He began presently to think again of the dangers to which she had exposed herself, and of how easily one mishap might have resulted in the capture of both the prisoner and his would-be rescuer. Then it occurred to him that there was a possibility that she might be arrested and tried for what she had done, and it gave him a great start.

"Have you thought," he asked, "that the officers may come here and accuse you, when they find that he is gone?"

"What can they prove?" she responded, smiling through her tears. "There is no one who can testify against me without getting himself into trouble."

"But they could arrest you—on suspicion," he said, "and keep you perhaps for weeks under lock and key, even if they had to discharge you at last."

"Could they?" She looked startled. "What would you advise me to do?"

He looked at the clock. Then he went to a desk and picked up a newspaper that lay there.

"A steamer of the Guion line sails at eleven o'clock," he said, after inspecting its columns. "We must manage to get aboard in some way, without exciting suspicion. It will not do to attempt to remove our trunks. Could you travel with what things you could pack in a small bag?"

She looked lugubrious.

"And have no toilets to appear in at table? That would be dreadful!"

"You would prefer perhaps dining with the sheriff of the city of New York," said Lysle, sententiously.

"No, that must be avoided, but there will be some way to get my trunks over. It is only half-past four now, and there is plenty of time. I will arrange it. I have done more important things than that to-night, and I will see that there is no trouble."

He had grave doubts of the expediency of her plan, but she seemed to have decided upon it, and he said no more. She began at once to pack her things, and he did the same with his own. In response to his suggestion that she call Clothilde to assist her, she said the woman must be exhausted from her vigil and had best be allowed her rest.

"You and I are different, Lysle," she laughed. "We are not upset by a little flurry. Stanley knew what he was about when he put the strength and muscle on my body years and years ago. Poor Stanley!" She paused, to wipe her eyes again. "I seemed twice as strong as he when I helped him into the carriage. He has grown so old and gray! But we must think of the bright side now.

It will be such a joke on the prison officials, when they find him gone!"

The young woman who had arranged the escape through her lover, came in very early, and was relieved to find that Rosalie had returned safely, and that Mr. Melrose was out of danger of recapture. She was also pleased when she found that Rosalie intended to take the Liverpool steamer, and promised to aid her in all possible ways to leave the house without attracting too much attention. It was decided that Lysle should settle the bill, giving the impression that he intended to take a Western train, and after the carriages had left the house and gone some distance, the drivers were to be informed for the first time of the real destination of the occupants. A messenger was sent to the steamer office to engage state-rooms for two assumed names. Everything went well, and half an hour before the steamer was to start, the intended passengers of the Barrett House were on board.

By this time the business part of New York was ringing with the news of the escape of Melrose. The watchman in charge of Stanley's corridor had been found in a genuine state of unconsciousness, Rosalie having put a light dose of opium into the whiskey which Stanley was to give him, thinking the surer method the better. In those incomprehensible ways that police sometimes have, one of the inspectors learned that though Lysle and Rosalie had left the Barrett House ostensibly bound for the Grand Central Depot, they had engaged state-rooms on the Alaska. Not doubting that Stanley was going with them, the officer who made this discovery rushed into the nearest magistrate's and got a warrant for all three, and before the steamer left

her dock he boarded her with the expectation of immortalizing his name and winning promotion by a most important capture.

Time was pressing. He began a thorough search of the boat. He saw a hundred faces, but not the one he cared most to find, that of Stanley, whom he knew by sight very well. The steamer left her moorings and started down the tide. He did not mind that, as he knew he could get the Pilot Boat to take him and his prisoners back. He searched still, aided by one of the passengers, whom he happened to know, but without effect. Lysle and Rosalie he had little difficulty in finding. But he consoled himself with the reflection that the offences of Mr. Melrose were extraditable, and that he could be arrested in Liverpool on a cablegram, when he tried to leave the steamer.

The vessel continued down the river and out into the bay. The officer saw no use in waiting longer. He told his friend to keep an eye on Lysle while he descended into the cabin to bring up Rosalie, who had gone down to her room on an errand. Knocking at the door of the state-room, it was opened by Clothilde, whose fears were under full strain, and who gave a cry at sight of the strange man.

"I wish to speak with Miss Vandenhoff," he said.

Although Rosalie had been registered as a passenger under another name, she did not see any object in denying her identity now that the steamer was on its way to England. She came immediately to the door and said that she was the lady in question; upon which he handed her the warrant, duly signed and conspicuously sealed with the seal of the court.

"Clothilde," she said, coolly, "go on the deck and

rem in there till I come. Be sure you say nothing to any one about my having a visitor." Then to the officer she added, "Step inside, sir. I will be ready in a moment."

The officer was a small man, and noted on the force for his unvarying politeness to the fair sex, among whom he was popularly believed to be a favorite. He accepted the invitation with alacrity, and hastened to say how much he regretted the necessity of performing this disagreeable duty, and that he trusted she would be able to establish her innocence of the offenses charged; with much more to the same effect.

Rosalie all this time pretended to be arranging her hair and putting on her bonnet at the mirror.

"I have warrants also for both the Messrs. Melrose," he added.

"Both!" she said, assuming astonishment. "Let me see them."

He displayed the documents and she took them in her hands to look over.

"But I do not see the use of these things," she said, innocently. "How are you to get us ashore now that the boat has started?"

"Oh, that is easy enough," he replied. "The tug will not leave us for half an hour yet. We can all go in that. And if you wish to do a real service for Mr. Stanley Melrose you will advise him to accompany us without trouble. The English authorities will certainly take him when he arrives at Liverpool, and send him back again, and he will only get a longer sentence."

She seemed much interested.

"Do you really think so?" she asked, demurely.

"There is no doubt of it."

She paused to consider.

"Supposing we should refuse to go with you—what could you do about it? We are on an English vessel, you know."

He smiled wisely.

"Those warrants that you hold in your hand would be respected by the captain while we are in American waters. He would furnish me assistance if you should be so foolish as to resist."

She hesitated a moment. He held out his hand for the warrants, when, with a sudden motion, she dropped them out of the window.

"They are gone," she said, quietly. "Will he furnish you help to take me now?"

The officer lost his temper in his vexation, cursing the folly that had led him to allow the documents to leave his hands.

"I shall take *you* at least," he replied, bitterly. "I think I shall not need much help to do that."

Rosalie drew herself up. She was almost as tall as he.

"You think so?" she replied, icily.

"Yes," he responded, losing his temper completely as the thought of his idiocy came stronger upon him. He drew out a pair of handcuffs. "If you make the least resistance I shall put these on you."

As he put his hands on her arm she caught him by both his wrists with a grasp like a vice, and threw him by sheer strength upon her lower berth, where he lay in her clutch as helpless as a child.

I am going out of that door and lock it after me," she said, bending over him. "If you attempt to move I do not know what I shall do, but I think I shall kill you!"

Thoroughly startled, both at the extraordinary

strength she had shown, which he could readily see was but a tithe of that which she possessed, and at the sudden change in her manner, the officer let her leave the room and lock the door after her without a protest. She made her way at once to the deck, and meeting the third officer of the steamer, she told him that there was a person in her state-room who she thought wished to go ashore in the tug, at the same time handing him her key.

Then she went to Lysle and hastily related the story. He urged that they both had best conceal themselves till the tug had gone, but she would not listen to that. A minute later the inspector came up the companion way and called the captain.

"Here are two criminals for whom I have obtained warrants," he said, in a voice choking with rage, "and I want help to arrest them."

"Let me see your warrants," responded the imperturbable officer.

"That woman has destroyed them."

The captain turned to Lysle and Rosalie.

"What do you say to this?" he asked.

"We say," said Rosalie, quietly, "that our passage is paid on this steamer to Liverpool, and that we intend to go there without molestation from any one."

The pilot was getting ready to leave the vessel, and the master of the tug inquired whether any one was going with him.

"Have you a ticket?" asked the steamer captain of the inspector.

"No, sir, but—"

"Then get aboard that tug," said the captain, turning away.

There was nothing else to do, and the inspector complied with a very ill grace.

"You will hear from me," he said, as he left the boat.

A banker who had heard of Stanley's escape, and the rumors that connected Rosalie with the affair, told it all to a group of passengers soon after, and she was at once the heroine of the hour. When they learned that it was her money that had been taken, and that she had risked so much to save the thief, their admiration was intense. The captain made her sit with Lysle at his table, and the voyage over was made as pleasant to her as possible in every way.

CHAPTER XXX.

"WHERE ARE YOUR JEWELS?"

Mme. Fleury was as glad to see Rosalie again as if she had been a child of her own. She caught her to her breast as soon as she made her appearance in the hotel in the Avenue de l'Alma, crying, "My dear girl! My darling child!" with great fervor. But she was not long in realizing that there had been a great change in her late charge. At sixteen Rosalie had worn the appearance of eighteen, and now when her eighteenth birthday had come and gone, she might have easily been taken to be in the twenties.

It was not that her face seemed older than it should be, but she had a manner which could not be reconciled with her extreme youth. She was a

woman in everything. Her frivolity had given way to that sober sense which usually comes only with years. She showed it in her dress, in her walk, in her manner of speech, in her part in the conversation. Mme. Fleury could not help thinking that this wise young person had suddenly become quite fit to chaperone some other girl, instead of needing a chaperone herself.

"I am afraid I cannot afford it, Lysle," said Rosalie one day, when some extra expense had been proposed.

It sounded very odd, that expression, coming from her, who had never limited her desires for the things that money could purchase.

"Nonsense!" he replied, quickly. "You can afford anything you wish."

"But I thought," she answered, slowly, "that my money was about all gone."

"Much you know about it!" was his response. "There is plenty left. But where are your jewels? You have never put them on once since we left America."

She looked at her fingers, on which there was only one ring, a plain little affair with ruby setting, that Stanley had given her for a birthday present when she was eleven. She had had it enlarged twice, and whatever else she wore, she was never without that.

"I do not think I care for diamonds now," she replied.

Something in the way she said this aroused his suspicions.

"They are very becoming to you, though," he answered. "Get them out, please, and let me see

them on you once more. I am a better judge than you as to whether you ought to wear them."

She looked into his honest eyes, and the thought came to her that there was a certain wrong in deceiving him.

"I will tell you the truth, Lysle," said she, soberly. "I have no diamonds. I have given them all away."

Careless as he was of money this startled him. Given them away! They had cost nearly one hundred thousand francs! What a child this was to speak so quietly of giving away such a sum.

"You cannot mean that, I think," he said. "What have you done with them?"

She came to him, and put her soft hand on his shoulder. It was a way she had when she wanted to soften anything to him that she feared he would not quite like to hear.

"Don't scold me, Lysle. I gave them to Stanley."

"To Stanley!" he echoed, with a shudder. "And —and he *took* them?"

"He did not know what they were. I put them all in a little package and gave it to him the last thing before he left the boat to go on the vessel. I only said that he must be careful of it, and that I wanted him to have it, to do what he thought best with. All the money he had after paying his passage to South America was $250. I thought he might need the gems very much, and they were of no real use to me. You do not like it, Lysle, and I am very sorry, but I did what I thought right."

He was too full of emotion to speak, and she mistook his silence for reproof, both of herself and of the man who had accepted her gift.

"I do not think you ought to care," she went on, seeing that he remained silent "If I am willing to

go without them, what difference can it make to you? But I know what the trouble is. You do not like Stanley, and you would rather—"

He interrupted her with a sudden motion of his hand.

"You must not say that, Rosalie."

"It was *my* money—that miserable money of mine that has made him all this trouble," she went on, the old spirit breaking out in her. "It was not yours, nor the sheriff's, nor the inspectors, nor even that Mr. Woodstock's, who made himself so officious. It was just mine, and I do not care a penny for it all. The diamonds were mine, and I gave them to him because I wanted to. I can think of nothing but that wanderer in a strange land, trying to get recognition of some kind after all those years when he has been so prosperous. Here we are with our comforts and luxuries, and there he is with nothing but his hands and his brain, beginning life again like a boy, only without a boy's hopes and ambitions. I am glad I gave them to him, Lysle, and I wish I had ten times as much to give him. He may find an opening there where a few thousand dollars will help put him into a good place. Tell me you do not care, Lysle! You, who are so kind and good, you must not hold these bitter feelings against Stanley!"

She had talked so fast that he had found no place where he could stop the flow of words, but at the first opportunity he told her that she was doing him a wrong; that he was quite willing she should do as she pleased about the diamonds; and that so far from wishing any ill to Stanley, he would gladly do anything in his power to help him to even partially regain the position in life that he had lost.

"He is my cousin, Rosalie," he said, putting his arm about her for the first time. "If that were not reason enough, the fact that he is so dear to you would furnish any further incentive necessary to win him my regard."

Her eyes ran over with tears of joy. The Indian spirit that Stanley had inculcated gave way before such trying tests as this.

"Do you care very much for me?" she whispered.

He was thrown off his guard by the unexpectedness of the question.

"Is there anything else in the world that I care for?" he exclaimed. "When you are happily settled, what more will there be for me to do?"

His agitation quite upset her. She had never seen him in such a mood.

"There will always be something for *you* to live for," she said. "You are a great painter—a very famous man—with a wonderful career in store."

He shook off the depression that had crept upon him, and which he was ashamed that she should see.

"Never think for one moment, Rosalie, that I have anything but the best of feeling toward my cousin. There is one way, at least, in which I can prove it to you. We will find out if there is any possibility of benefitting him in a pecuniary way, and if there is, I will send him whatever money he needs."

"You are so good!" she cried. "And a moment ago I was saying all sorts of cross things to you. But he has not written us yet. What do you suppose is the reason?"

"It is hardly time to expect it. He went on a sailing vessel, you remember, which may have been

delayed. Then he would probably wish to wait till he had something special to write before he sent a letter. But I will not wait for him. I will send him a letter to-day, offering my assistance. The knowledge that money can be obtained may aid him even before it arrives."

She heard him with every manifestation of delight.

"And you have plenty, Lysle, so that you can do this just as well as not?"

He laughed loudly.

"Plenty! Why, of course I have! Did you think I was a pauper? Let me go now, and write at once. The steamer sails for Buenos Ayres to-morrow."

He rose, and she stood beside him, her countenance radiant.

"Lysle, do you remember that evening, when I was a little girl at Cape May, and you asked me for a kiss, and I refused?"

"Yes," he assented. "I remember it very well."

She came closer and looked up into his eyes.

"May I give it to you now?"

For almost a minute neither of them stirred. Her mouth was within a few inches of his, and their eyes were fixed on those of each other. He had a great struggle, and then he spoke with composure.

"Rosalie," said he, "let us sit down again. There is something that I want to say to you."

She sank beside him on a sofa, and he took both of her hands in his. It was the first time in his life that he had not had an awe of her.

"I am going to talk to you about a matter that I have had in mind for some time," he said. "I am going to talk to you as a man can talk to a woman,

as a guardian can talk to his ward. For you are a woman now, and you can understand me. You ask if you may give me that kiss which you once refused with such indignation, and I am going to tell you that you cannot. The lapse of years has changed everything. If you are pleased with what I have done or offered to do, that is payment enough for me. The lips of a young woman are not to be lightly touched, and there is no relation between us that would justify me in accepting the offer made in a moment of gratitude for what you consider a favor. Rosalie, my dear girl, let those lips first be pressed by the man whose love you have had ever since you were old enough to know his voice—who now, through all his errors and his misfortunes, you hold dearest on earth."

The hands that he held had grown suddenly cold. Had he been less in earnest he would have been amazed at the phenomenon. But he was so wrought up with his subject that he noticed only the still face turned toward his, on which not a muscle was seen to move.

"When I first saw you and Stanley together I could not help marveling that he, a man of business, full of legal work and all kinds of projects, should devote himself so to such a tiny thing. The next time I went to America I noticed it still more, and in a hundred little ways that he probably never dreamed would attract my attention. When I painted those pictures of you he tried to buy one of them, and as I had made a rule never to sell anything I had done, he showed the greatest disappointment. As you grew older, the very love that he had conceived for you made him assume those distant ways that caused you such surprise and annoyance. Stanley thought

that closer contact with you was not well when it was evident that you were no longer a child. All the time that you were holding hard feelings against him for his apparent neglect, I am convinced that he was learning to love you more than ever."

The hands had grown quite icy now, but he did not notice.

"Stanley's great ambition in life was to be a man of prodigious wealth. In striving to accomplish it too rapidly he was led into ventures which resulted in disaster. I have no doubt that he fully believed when he first used your money that he could thus double it as well as his own. I believe he thought he could see, down the vistas of time, the dear little woman he loved, sitting at his fireside, enjoying the great wealth that his shrewdness and ability had brought her. How he failed to accomplish what he sought, we both know. But in those days when it became evident that ruin was on his track, and that either flight or inprisonment was to be his fate, what was it that troubled him most? Not the loss of fortune, but the distance he had placed between himself and the one he loved more than wealth, more than honor, more than freedom. A thoroughly bad man would have gathered a goodly sum from the wreck and gone out of the country before he was suspected. Stanley acted like one crushed. He waited for the arrest which he must have known was inevitable. He went to prison without a word, and would have taken his sentence without even making a defense in the court. What had he to live for outside the granite walls? So far as he could forecast, his folly had lost him forever the pearl he had most cared to win.

"Then, in the midst of the Egyptian blackness

that enshrouded him, a light came. The loved one risked her reputation, her liberty, to set him free. He took her hand and walked out of his prison into the world. In a foreign country he is now trying to make himself again a man. What is there to comfort him? Of what use will success be, if fortune smiles once more, unless he has the promise of the one he loves that she will some day come to him? If he has not yet had that promise—if he feared to ask it—he must have it now. Stanley loves you, Rosalie, and you love him. You are old enough to think seriously of your duty. As soon as you wish, I will go with you to Buenos Ayres and leave you there, the wife of a man who will never again, I am sure, give you cause for a tear or a blush."

She made him no answer, but arose and slowly left the room. Lysle went that day to an art dealer and arranged to sell several of his paintings, not making nearly as good a bargain as he might, for he despised the entire business, and was only anxious to get a certain sum, regardless of how much he gave in exchange. He then wrote a long letter to Stanley, offering to do anything in his power to help him, and enclosing a draft as an earnest of his promises.

"I wish," he wrote, "that you would accept the enclosed in exchange for the jewels that Rosalie gave you, and return them to me by the earliest steamer. I think you would have to sacrifice them if you sold them there. Do not think I am interfering between you and her, for I quite approve of the motive which made her give them to you. I am sure you will find use for capital, and trust that you will soon be on your feet, financially speaking, and ready to battle with the world successfully."

Much more Lysle wrote also in that letter, the whole breathing a fraternal spirit that was intended to cheer and encourage the expatriated man. When Stanley received it he had just been offered a most eligible chance to enter a young firm engaged in the export of hides, where the profits were sure to be great. His prospective partners wanted a little more money than they could command, in order to increase the business, and he had felt his poverty deeply as he saw the golden opportunity slipping from him for the want of a sum that he would have considered a short time ago a mere bagatelle. Lysle's draft would enable him to accept the offer, but it seemed degrading to take it in exchange for the diamonds, which he had intended to return to Rosalie with his thanks. Had he known what was in the little packet which she handed to him in the boat, he would never have taken it. Feeling certain, however, that he could soon return the amount, he accepted it, saying in his letter to Lysle that he did not consider it anything else but a loan, and that he should repay it with interest as soon as he could do so.

It was a happy day for Lysle when he brought the jewels to Rosalie, and spread them out on her table before her astonished eyes. She was inclined to be displeased at first, until he told her that he had sent Stanley much more money than he could possibly have got for the stones. He made her put them on again and told her how much more natural she looked, but she did not seem quite satisfied.

"I do not think I shall ever enjoy them as I used," she said. "I almost wish you would sell them now, and let me send the price to him to add to what he has already. A man out there cannot have too

much money. There are great chances for capital at Buenos Ayres. I have read it in a book that I have."

She had changed a good deal. Not only did she care less for jewelry, but her love of dress had lessened, also. She had become a very quiet little woman, and Mme. Fleury was not entirely at her ease about her.

"Do you not notice that something is preying on the mind of mademoiselle?" she asked Lysle, in one of their conferences.

"Yes," he replied. "I may as well confide to you the reason, Mme. Fleury. She is constantly thinking of her guardian in South America. Rosalie is now eighteen years old, and the friendship of the child has become the love of the woman. As soon as he is settled there, I shall try to bring the marriage about. Stanley is ashamed to ask her to share such a broken and dishonored life as his, and of course she cannot make the proposal, being a woman. But they both entertain the same wish, and it will be for me to arrange it."

The woman eyed him with a peculiar expression.

"Are you sure that you have rightly guaged her sentiments?"

"Oh, yes. There is no doubt. I have already spoken to her, and she was much impressed."

"Excuse me for saying it, but you also ought to marry, M. Lysle," said Mme. Fleury. "You are not a man who should condemn yourself to bachelorhood."

"I shall never marry," he said, simply.

The crisis came when Stanley had been absent a little over six months. Lysle received a letter from him, saying that he was prospering wonderfully in

his new business, which his cousin's generosity had enabled him to enter, and that he had hopes of the future that were really bright. After giving a slight indication of the condition of his trade, he startled his reader by adding these lines.

"And now, my dear cousin, I am going to say something that will surprise you. Since I have been here I have had the honor of an introduction to one of the best and noblest women who ever lived, and we have become much attached to each other. Feeling the loneliness of a single life as I never felt it in my own country, and knowing that she was also without attachments here, I have asked her to be my wife, and she has accepted. Before I did so, I gave her a truthful history of my career, and she takes me as I am, knowing me fully repentant for what I have done. We are to be married within three months, and I am sure you and Rosalie will wish us happiness."

Lysle felt his brain reeling. Anything so cold-blooded he had never conceived. He wished for a moment that he had back the money he had sent to this ungrateful wretch.

"How can I ever tell it to her!" he moaned. "How can I ever tell it to her!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

TOO WONDERFUL TO BE TRUE.

For the next week Lysle was plunged into the deepest melancholy. Knowing the sensitive nature of his ward, he dreaded the effect of the news which he would have to impart. He avoided her all that he could, pretending to have errands in other parts of the city at dinner time, and to be very busy in his studio all the rest of the day. But once, when he had told her that he must not be disturbed on any account, as he had to finish a certain picture, she disregarded his injunction and went by herself to the Rue Dutot, where she surprised him sitting with his head buried in his hands in an attitude of the deepest dejection.

"Why, Lysle," she cried, going instantly to him, "what is the matter?"

"Nothing," he answered, sitting up. "I thought I asked you not to come here to-day."

"Shall I go?" she inquired, flushing.

"Oh, no," he replied. "I shall not do any more work this morning."

She knew that something troubled him. He had not been as cheerful as usual for a week. She walked about the studio, looking at the paintings.

"Do you know, Lysle," she said, presently, "I never see that picture of 'The Sleeping Girl' but it always reminds me of Clothilde? I never saw two faces more alike."

"It is Clothilde," he said. "I thought you knew."

She drew herself up a little, and her breath came short.

"And you—you painted her—that way?"

"Yes. When I was a student."

She paced the floor for several minutes.

"I am very angry," she said, at last.

"Why?" He looked up.

"That you should bring a woman of that kind to live with me."

"Of what kind?" he asked, somewhat dazed.

"One who would submit to be painted in such a pose!"

Then he told her of the young girl who had been compelled by her step-mother to earn her living in that manner, of how she had struggled against the disagreeable task, and of how she had gone through suffering and privation to free herself from it. As the story progressed the lines in Rosalie's face grew softer.

"I am sorry for what I said," she told him, gently. "You need a great deal of patience to get along with me. I ought to have known that you would not do anything dishonorable. But what troubles you? You need not tell me it is nothing, for I have noticed it." Suddenly she glanced at the walls of the studio and missed the paintings that he had sold.

"Ah! I know! Some one has stolen them?"

"Stolen?" he repeated, following her finger with his eyes.

"Yes. They were there the last time I came, and now they are gone. They have been stolen—or else—Lysle! You have not *sold* them!"

Had they been the living children of his body as

he used to call them of his brain, she could not have put more horror into her tone.

"It does not matter," he responded, arousing himself. "They are of very little consequence; just a few months labor that I can devote again to something better."

"You *have* sold them," she repeated, in freezing accents. "Why? To get money! For what? To send to Stanley!"

He looked up defiantly.

"Well, I did! And what of it? It was foolish to keep them forever, when there was a good market. I would not care if the rest went, too! Only I would not send the money to *him* again! No, not if he were dying of hunger!"

Was this Lysle, the gentle, affectionate Lysle? She was too much astonished to answer him.

"Am I severe?" he muttered. "Before you say so, read that!"

He threw the letter at her feet, and she picked it up with a strange feeling of apprehension. What had Stanley done now? Robbed some one else, perhaps, and laid himself liable to another term in prison. She could think of nothing but that which could justify the tone and manner that Lysle had used. She hardly dared open the terrible missive, but she found the courage, and read it through without stopping.

Lysle was alarmed after he had handed it to her, at the rashness of what he had done. He thought when it was too late that he should have broken it to her in some gentler way, but he had been trying for a week to think of one and had failed. He watched her expression as she glanced over the lines, and to his inexpressible wonder he saw that the

frightened look gave way to a pronounced smile as she neared the end.

"I am so glad!" she cried, looking up. "Stanley has taken the only way to find real happiness. But —what is there here that you do not like? Surely," she added, mischievously, "you are not such a woman-hater that you object to his marriage!"

It was now his turn to be dumbfounded. She read the letter slowly again, but could not understand.

"He has written that he is prospering in business and about to marry an estimable woman whom he loves. Ah, Lysle, I was right before! You hate Stanley, in spite of your gift to him, and you grudge him peace and contentment. You think he should be punished more severely for his fault. I am very sorry. It is not at all like you."

It seemed to him that he must be dreaming.

"And it pleases *you*!" he articulated.

"More than anything in the world. Do you think I, who have cared for Stanley all my life, can feel anything less than elation that he is to have this joy? It lifts a load from my heart. I shall no longer think of him as the lonely adventurer, but as the man of family, with a wife at his side, comforting and cheering him in all his vicissitudes. It will be the making of him! How can you ask if it pleases me?"

He heard her and he could see that she was in earnest. It was not as he at first suspected, a mere pretence of delight to hide the sorrow that lay underneath. Had he been in error all this time?

"But I thought," he stammered, "that you—"

"Was in love with him myself!" she exclaimed, with a gay laugh. "And so I was, as a child loves its father, as a ward loves the kind guardian from

whose brain she takes her first impulses. I loved him as he loved me, but never in the way you are trying to imagine. No, Lysle, never."

Honesty beamed from her eyes and he could not doubt her.

"Why did you not say this to me that day when I talked with you about him?" he replied. "You knew what I thought, and you let me go on thinking so."

"There were difficulties in the way," she smiled, sweetly. "You had just refused me a kiss, and I was too abashed to say anything."

He rose from his chair with dignity.

"That is not a thing to jest about, Rosalie!"

"Isn't it, dear?" she replied, coming towards him. "But you should not have refused me, for you may never get the chance again."

There were a hundred laughs chasing each other over her beautiful, blushing countenance.

"Rosalie," he said, bending toward her, "I must say something to you, now that I know I can at least do so without disloyalty to Stanley."

She took his face between her hands.

"There is no need of saying anything, Lysle. I have known it for ever so long."

It seemed too wonderful to be true.

"And you love me?" he cried.

"You've guessed it at last," she answered. "I thought you never would. Oh, Lysle, what a dear, darling, slow old boy you are!"

"I have good news to write you," said Luke Woodstock, in a letter received by Lysle, shortly after this, "that will, I think, cause you some sur-

prise. You recollect that the only thing . was able to save out of your cousin's investments was a lot of certificates of stock in the Alma Gold Mine, which nobody wanted, and which I was consequently able to buy in for a song. Recently I heard from a miner who had returned from Colorado, that a mine near the Alma had begun to show up well, and I took a trip out that way. What I learned induced me to put men at work in the empty shaft and within a week they had 'struck it rich.' I telegraphed home to my partner to buy up all the rest of the stock that he could get his hands on, and between the Vandenhoff estate, Stanley and myself, we have about the whole of it. I cannot say where the lode may end, but there is enough in sight already to pay off every dollar of Stanley's defalcation, and leave him a handsome surplus. Miss Rosalie will get the whole of her fortune again inside of a year, and probably much more with it. I am now trying to arrange things with the district-attorney to have the indictment against Stanley *nol. pros'd*, so that he can come home and make restitution to those who have suffered by him, as I have no doubt he will be glad to do.

"There is another thing that may interest you. Arthur Peck was killed out in California last week, in a row over a woman. Dudley Morgan is doing well—he is now in my office—and sends his regards."

Lysle handed this letter to Rosalie and was glad to witness the joy it gave her.

"It is not that I want the money for myself," she said, "but it will enable Stanley to hold up his head again; and then we shall see his new wife, for they will be sure to come to Paris and pay us a visit."

"Y-e-s," said Lysle, slowly. "It will be better for them to come here, I think, than for us to go to the United States. There is a charge hanging over us, you know, of assisting in the escape of a prisoner."

Rosalie laughed heartily at this pleasantry, and they went together to tell Mme Fleury and Clothilde

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